

MEDITATIONS
AND
CONTEMPLATIONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

CONTAINING

VOL. I.	VOL. II.
MEDITATIONS among the TOMBS.	CONTEMPLATIONS on the NIGHT.
REFLECTIONS on a FLOWER-GARDEN.	CONTEMPLATIONS on the STARRY HEA- VENS; and,
And, A DESCANT on CREATION.	A WINTER-PIECE.

By JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

Late Rector of Weston-Favel, in Northamptonshire.

VOLUME SECOND.

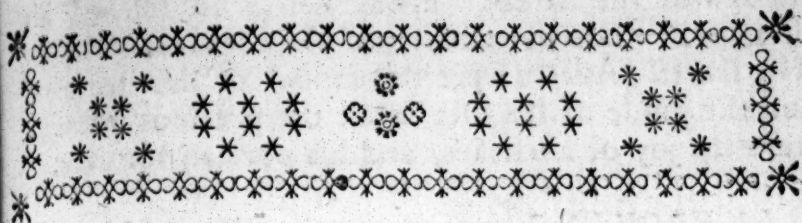
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M. DCC. LXXIV.





T O

P A U L O R C H A R D,

O F

Stoke-Abbey, in Devonshire, Esq;

Dear S I R,

AS your honoured father was pleased to make choice of me to answer in your name at the font, and to exercise a sort of guardianship over your spiritual interests; permit me, by putting these little treatises into your hand, to fulfil some part of that solemn obligation.

Gratitude for many signal favours, and a *conscientious* regard to my sacred engagement, have long ago inspired my breast with the warmest wishes, both for *your true dignity*, and real *happiness*. Nor can I think of a more endearing, or a more effectual way of advancing either the one or the other, than to set before you a sketch of your excellent *father's character*.—— Illustrious examples are the most winning incitements to virtue: and none can come attended with such particular recommendations to you as the pattern of that worthy person, from whom, under a gracious God, you derive your very being.

A most cordial and reverential *esteem* for the *divine word*, was one of his remarkable qualities. Those oracles of Heaven were his principal delight, and his inseparable companions. Your gardens, your solitary walks, and the hedges of your fields, can witness, with what an unwearied assiduity he exercised himself in the

the Law of the LORD. From hence he fetched his maxims of wisdom, and formed his judgment of things. The sacred *precepts* were the model of his tempers, and the guide of his life, while the precious *promises* were the joy of his heart, and his portion for ever.

IMPROVING company was another of his most relishing pleasures. Few gentlemen were better furnished, either with richness of fancy, or copiousness of expression, to bear a shining part in conversation. With these talents, he always endeavoured to give some useful, and generally some religious turn to the discourse. Nor did he ever reflect with greater complacency, on his social hours, than when they tended to glorify the eternal Majesty; and to awaken in himself and others, a more lively sense of devotion.

To *project* for the good of *others*, was his frequent study; and to *carry* those benevolent contrivances in *execution*, his favourite employ. When visited by the young persons of the neighbourhood, far from taking an ungraceful pride to initiate them in debauchery, or confirm them in a riotous habit; it was his incessant aim, by finely-adapted persuasives, to encourage them in industry, and establish them in a course of sobriety; to guard them against the allurements of vice, and animate them with the principles of piety. A noble kind of hospitality this! which will probably transmit its beneficial influence to their earthly possessions; to their future families; and even to their everlasting state.

A conviction of human indigence, and a thorough persuasion of the divine all-sufficiency, induced him to be *frequent in prayer*. To prostrate himself in profound adoration, before that infinitely exalted Being, who dwells in light inaccessible, was his glory; to implore the continuance of the almighty favour, and the increase of all Christian graces, was his gain. In those moments, no doubt, he remembered you, Sir, with a particular earnestness; and lodged many an ardent petition in the court of Heaven, for his

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his infant-son. Cease not to second them with your own devout supplications, that they may descend upon your head, "in the fulness of the blessings of the "gospel of peace."

To give their genuine lustre to all his other endowments he was careful to maintain an *humble mind*. Though his friends might admire his superior abilities, or his acquaintance applaud his exemplary behaviour, he saw how far he fell short of the mark of his high calling: saw, and lamented his defects: saw, and renounced himself: relying, for final acceptance, and endless felicity, on a better righteousness than his own; even on the transcendently perfect righteousness, and inconceivably precious death of JESUS the Redeemer. This was the rock of his hope, and the very crown of his rejoicing.

THESE, Sir, are some of the distinguishing characteristics of your deceased parent. And, as you had the misfortune to lose so valuable a relative, before you was capable of forming any acquaintance with his person; I flatter myself, you will the more attentively observe his picture. This his *moral picture*; designed, not to be set in gold, or sparkle in enamel, but to breathe in your spirit, and to live in all your conduct.—Which, though it be entirely your own, calculated purely for yourself, may possibly, (like the family-pieces in your parlour, that glance an eye upon as many as enter the room), make some pleasing and useful impression on every beholder.—May every one, charmed with the beautiful image, catch its resemblance; and each, in his respective sphere, "go and do likewise."

BUT you, Sir, are peculiarly concerned to copy the amiable original. As the order of an indulgent providence, has made you heir of the *affluent circumstances*; let not a gay and thoughtless inadvertance, cut you off from the richer *inheritance* of these noble qualifications.—These will be your security amidst all the
glittering

glittering dangers ; which are inseparable from blooming years, and an elevated situation in life. These are your path, your sure and only path, to true greatness, and solid happiness.——Tread in these steps, and you cannot fail of being the darling of your friends, and the favourite of Heaven. Tread in these steps, and you will give inexpressible joy to one of the best of mothers ; you will become an extensive blessing to your fellow-creatures ; and which, after such most engaging motives, is scarce worthy to be mentioned, you will be the delight, the honour, and the boast of,

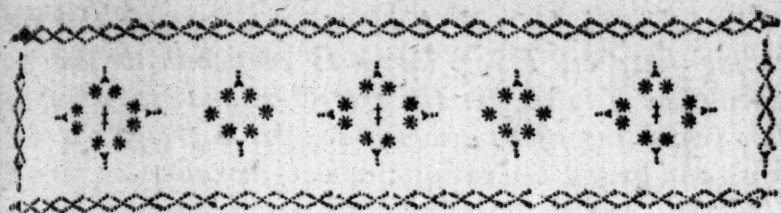
Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate Godfather,

And faithful humble servant,

Weston-Favel, near
Northampton,
July 14. 1747.

JAMES HERVEY.



P R E F A C E.

*WE have already exercised our speculations on the tombs and flowers; surveying nature covered with the deepest horrors, and arrayed in the richest beauties. Allegory taught many of the objects to speak the language of virtue; while imagination lent her colouring, to give the lessons an engaging air.—And this with a view of imitating that divine Instructor; who commissioned the lily *, in her silver suit, to remonstrate in the ear of unbelieving reason: who sent his disciples, (men ordained to teach the universe), to learn maxims of the last importance from the most insignificant birds *, that wander through the paths of the air; from the very meanest herbs *, that are scattered over the face of the † ground.*

Emboldened

*** Matth. vi. 26. 28. 29. 30.

† Celebrated writers, as *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*, *Thucydides* and *Livy*, are observed to have a style peculiar to themselves.—Now, whoever considers the discourses of *Christ*, will find a style by which he remarkably distinguishes himself, and which may properly be called **HIS OWN**. Majestic, yet familiar; happily uniting dignity with condescension; it consists in teaching his followers the *sublimest truths*, by spiritualizing on the most common occurrences: which, besides its being level to the lowest apprehensions; and admirably adapted to steal into the most inattentive heart; is accompanied with this very singular advantage, that it turns even the *sphere of business* into a *school of instruction*; and renders the most ordinary objects a set of monitors, ever soliciting our regard. because ever present to our senses.—So that I believe, it may be said of this *amiable method*, in which our **LORD** conveyed; as well as of that *powerful energy*, which attended his doctrines; That *never man spake like this man*.—The *harvest*

Emboldened by the kind acceptance of the preceding sketches, I beg leave to confide in the same benevolence of taste, for the protection and support of the two remaining essays; which exhibit a prospect of still life, and grand operation: which moralize on the most composed, and most magnificent appearances of things, — In which fancy is again suffered to introduce her imagery; but only as the handmaid of truth: in order to dress her person, and display her charms; to engage the attention, and win the love, even of the gay, and of the fashionable. Which is more likely to be effected, by forming agreeable pictures of nature, and deriving instructive observations; than by the laborious method of long-deduced arguments, or close connected reasonings. — The contemplation of the heavens and the earth, of their admirable properties, and beneficial changes, has always afforded the most exalted gratification to the human mind. In compliance with this prevailing taste, I have drawn my serious admonitions from the stupendous theatre, and variegated scenery of the universe. That the reader may learn his duty, from his very pleasures: may gather wisdom, mingled with virtue, from the most refined entertainments, and noblest delights.

The evening, drawing her sables over the world, and gently darkening into Night, is a season peculiarly proper for sedate consideration. All circumstances con-

harvest approaching, he reminds his disciples of a far more important harvest, John iv. 35. Matth. xiii. 39. when immortal beings shall be reaped from the grave, and gathered in from all the quarters of the earth; when every human creature shall sustain the character of valuable wheat, or despicable tares; and accordingly be lodged in mansions of everlasting security, or consigned over to the rage of unquenchable fire. — In his charge to fishermen, when they are commencing preachers, Matth. iv. 19. he exhorts them, conformably to the nature of their late occupation, to use the same assiduity and address in winning souls, as they were wont to exercise in catching the finny prey. — But, for a further illustration of this not less useful, than curious subject, I would refer my reader to a most valuable note, in Sir Isaac Newton's observations on the prophecies; p. 148. 4to edition.

cur, to hush our passions, and soothe our cares; to tempt our steps abroad, and prompt our thoughts to serious reflection.

—Then is the time,
For those whom wisdom, and whom nature
charm,

To steal themselves from the degen'rate croud,
And soar above this little scene of things;
To tread low-thoughted vice beneath their feet;
To soothe the throbbing passions into peace;
And woo lone quiet in her silent walks*.

The favour I would solicit for the first of the following compositions is, That it may be permitted to attend, in such retired and contemplative excursions. To attend, if not under the character of a friend, at least in the humble capacity of a servant, or a page:—as a servant, to open the door of meditation, and remove every impediment to those best exercises of the mind; which blend advantage with amusement, and improve while they delight:—as a page, to gather up the unstable, fluctuating train of fancy; and collect her fickle powers into a consistent, regular, and useful habit of thinking.

The other, conversant among the starry regions, would lead the imagination through those beautiful tracks of unclouded azure; and point out to the judgment, some of those astonishing particulars, which so eminently signalize the celestial worlds. A prospect this, to which curiosity attracts our eyes, and to which scripture itself often directs our study. A prospect, of all others most excellently calculated, to enlarge the soul, and ennoble its conceptions;—to give the highest apprehensions of the everlasting God, and create sentiments of becoming superiority, with relation to all transitory interests;—in a word, to furnish faith with the surest foundation, for a steady assiance, and true magnanimity of spirit; to afford piety the strong-

* Thomf. Autumn, l. 973. last Edit. ramo.

est motives, both for a lively gratitude, and profound veneration.

While Galilæo lifts his tube, and discovers the prodigious magnitude of those radiant orbs;—while Newton measures their amazing distances, and unites the whole system, in harmonious order, by the subtle influences of attraction:—I would only, like the herald before that illustrious Hebrew, proclaim at every turn, “Bow the knee, and adore the almighty Maker; “magnify his eternal name, and make his praise, like “all his works, to be glorious”*

* Gen. xli. 43.

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CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

N I G H T.

*Night is fair Virtue's immemorial friend ;
The conscious moon, through ev'ry distant age,
Has held a lamp to Wisdom.*

Night-Thoughts, No V.

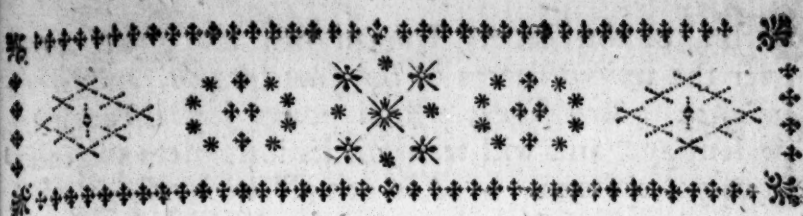
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CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT.

THE business of the day dispatched, and the sultry heats abated, invited me to the recreation of a walk : a walk, in one of the *finest recesses* of the country ; and in one of the most *pleasant evenings*, which the summer-season produced.

The limes and elms, uniting their branches over my head, formed a *verdant canopy*, and cast a most refreshing shade. Under my feet lay a *carpet* of nature's *velvet* ; grass intermingled with moss, and embroidered with flowers. Jessamines, in conjunction with woodbines, twined around the trees ; displaying their *artless beauties* to the eye, and diffusing their *delicious sweets* through the air. On either side, the boughs, rounded into a set of regular arches, opened a view into the *distant fields*, and presented me with a prospect of the *bending skies*. The little birds, all joyous and grateful for the favours of the light, were paying their acknowledgments in a *tribute* of *harmony*, and soothing themselves to rest with songs. While a French horn, from a neighbouring seat, sent its melodious accents, softened by the length of their passage, to complete the *concert* of the *grove*.

Roving in this most agreeable manner, my thoughts were exercised on a subject, more delightful than the season,

season, or the scene. I mean our late *signal victory* over the united forces of *intestine treason*, and *foreign invasion*. A victory, which pours joy through the present age, and will transmit its influences to generations yet unborn. — Are not all the blessings, which can endear society, or render life itself desirable, centered in our present *happy constitution*, and *auspicious government*? And were they not *all* struck at, by that impious and horrid blow, meditated at *Rome*; levelled by *France*; and seconded by factious *spirits* at *home*? Who then can be sufficiently thankful, for the gracious interposition of Providence; which has not only averted the impending ruin, but turned it, with aggravated confusion, on the authors of our troubles?

Methinks, every thing *valuable*, which I possess; every thing *charming*, which I behold; conspire to enhance this ever-memorable event. To this it is owing, that I can ramble unmolested along the vale of *private life*, and taste all the innocent satisfactions of a *contemplative retirement*. — Had rebellion* succeeded in her detestable designs: instead of walking with *security* and *complacency* in these flowery paths, I might have met the *assassin* with his *dagger*: or have been obliged to provide for my safety, by abandoning my habitation. — Farewell then, ye fragrant shades; seats of meditation, and calm repose! I should have been driven from your *loved retreats*, to make way for some *insulting victor*. — Farewell, then, ye pleasing toils and wholesome amusements of my rural hours! I should no more have reared the tender *flower* to the sun; no more have taught the *espalier* to expand her boughs; nor have fetched, any longer, from my *kitchen-garden*, the purest supplies of health.

Had rebellion succeeded in her detestable designs instead of being regaled with the *music* of the wood

* Referring to the rebellion, set on foot in the year 1745, which, for several months, made a very alarming progress in the North — but was happily extinguished by the glorious and decisive battle of Culloden.

I might have been alarmed with the sound of the trumpet, and all the thunder of war. Instead of being entertained with this *beautiful landscape*, I might have beheld our houses ransacked, and our villages plundered; I might have beheld our fenced cities encompassed with armies, and our fruitful fields "clothed with desolation;" or have been shocked with the still more frightful images of "garments rolled in blood," and of a ruffian's blade reeking from a brother's heart. Instead of *peace*, with her chearing olives, sheltering our abodes; instead of *justice*, with her impartial scale, securing our goods; *persecution* had brandished her sword, and *slavery* clanked her chains.

Nor are these miseries *imaginary* only, or the creatures of a groundless panic. There are, in a neighbouring kingdom, who very lately *experienced* them in all their rigour*. And, if the *malignant* spirit of *Popery*, had forced itself into our church; if an *abjured Pretender*, had cut his way to our throne; we could have no reason to expect a mitigation of their severity, on our behalf. — But, supposing the *tender mercies* of a bigotted usurper, to have been somewhat less *cruel*; yet where, alas! would have been the *encouragement*, to cultivate our little portion; or what *pleasure* could arise, from an improved spot; if both the one and the other lay, every moment, at the mercy of *lawless power*? This embittering circumstance would spoil their relish: and by rendering them a *precarious*, would render them a *joyless* acquisition. — In vain, might the *vine* spread her purple clusters; in vain, be lavish of her generous juices; if *tyranny*, like a ravenous harpy, should be always hovering over the bowl, and ready to snatch it from the lip of *industry*.

Liberty, that dearest of names; and *property*, that

* See a pamphlet, intitled, *Popery always the same*. — Which contains a narrative of the persecutions, and severe hardships, lately suffered by the *Protestants*, in the southern parts of *France*; and closes with a most *seasonable, alarming, and spirited address* to the inhabitants of *Great Britain*. Printed 1746.

best of charters; give an additional, an inexpressible charm, to every delightful object.—See how the declining sun has beautified the *western clouds*; has arrayed them in crimson, and skirted them with gold. Such a refinement of our *domestic bliss*, is property; such an improvement of our *public privileges*, is liberty.—When the lamp of day shall entirely withdraw his beams, there will still remain the same collection of floating vapours; but O! how changed, how gloomy! The carnation blushes no more; the golden edgings are gone; and all the *lovely tinges* are lost, in a *leaden coloured* lowering sadness. Such would be the aspect, of all these scenes of beauty; all these abodes of pleasure; if exposed continually to the caprice of *arbitrary sway*, or held in a state of abject and *cringing dependence*.

The light of heaven has almost finished his daily race, and hastens to the goal. He descends lower and lower; till his chariot wheels seem to hover on the utmost verge of day. And, what is somewhat remarkable, his *orb*, upon the point of setting, grows broader: the *shadows*, just before they are lost in undistinguished darkness, are surprisingly *lengthened**. —Like *blessings*, little prized, while *possessed*: but highly esteemed; the very instant they are *preparing* for their *flight*; bitterly regretted when once they are *gone*, and to be seen no more.

The radiant globe is, now, half immersed beneath the dusky earth. He is taking his leave of our hemisphere, and gilds the plains with a languid lustre.—But, could I view the *sea*, at this juncture, it would yield a most amusing and curious spectacle. The rays, striking horizontally on the liquid element, give it the appearance of floating glais: or, reflected in many a different direction, form a beautiful multiplicity of colours.—A *stranger*, as he walks along the sandy beach; and, lost in pensive attention, listens to the murmurings of the

* *Majoresque cadunt altis de Montibus Umbrae.*

restless flood; is agreeably alarmed by the *gay decorations* of the surface. With entertainment, and with wonder, he sees the curling waves, here glistening with white, there glowing with purple; in one place, wearing an azure tincture; in another, glancing a cast of undulating green; in the whole, exhibiting a piece of *fluid scenery*, that may vie with yonder pencil tapestries, though wrought in the loom, and tinged with the dyes of heaven.

But, while I am transported by fancy to the shores of the ocean, the great luminary is sunk beneath the horizon, and totally disappears. The whole face of the ground is overspread with shades; or with, what one of the finest painters of nature calls, a *dun obscurity*. Only a few very superior eminences are tipped with streaming silver. The tops of groves, and lofty towers, catch the *last smiles* of day*; are still irradiated by the departing beams.—But, oh! how transient is the distinction! how momentary the gift! Like all the blessings, which mortals enjoy below, it is *gone*, almost as soon as *granted*. See! how languishingly it trembles on the leafy spire; and glimmers, with a dying faintness, on the mountain's brow. The little vivacity, that remains, decays every moment. It can no longer hold its station. While I speak, it expires; and resigns the world to the gradual approach of night.

— Now twilight grey
Has in her sober liv'ry all things clad †.

Every object, a little while ago, glared with light; but now, all appears under a more qualified lustre. The animals harmonize with the insensible creation; and what was *gay* in those, as well as *glittering* in this, gives place to an universal *gravity*. In the *meadows*, all was jocund and sportive: but now the

* See this remarkable appearance, delicately described, and wrought into a comparison, which, in my opinion, is one of the most just, beautiful, and noble pieces of imagery, to be found in modern poetry. *Night-Thoughts*, No II. p. 42. 4to Edit.

† *Milt. Par. Lost*, B. iv. l. 598.

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gamesome lambs are grown weary of their frolics; and the tired shepherd has imposed silence on his pipe. In the *branches*, all was sprightliness and song: but now the lively green is wrapt in the descending glooms; and no tuneful airs are heard, but only the plaintive stock-dove, cooing mournfully through the grove.—Should I now be vain and trifling, the heavens and the earth would rebuke my unseasonable levity. Therefore, be these moments devoted to thoughts, *sedate*, as the closing day; *solemn*, as the face of things. And, indeed, however my social hours are enlivened with *innocent pleasantries*, let every evening, in her sable habit, toll the bell to *serious consideration*. Nothing can be more proper, for a creature that borders upon eternity, and is hastening continually to his final audit; than daily to slip away from the circle of amusements, and frequently to relinquish the hurry of business, in order to consider and adjust “the things that belong to his peace.”

SINCE the sun is departed, from whence can it proceed, that I am not involved in *pitchy darkness*? Whence these remainders of *diminished brightness*? which, though scarcely forming a refulgence, yet smoothe the rugged brow of night. I see not the shining orb, and yet am cheered with a portion of his softened splendors.—Does he remember us, in his progress through other climes; and send a *detachment* of his rays, to *escort* us in our further motions; or *cover* (if I may use the military term) our *retreat*, from the scene of action? Has he bequeathed us a dividend of his beams, sufficient to render our circumstances easy, and our situation agreeable? till sleep pours its soft oppression on the organs of sense; till sleep suspends all the operations of our hands; and entirely supercedes any more occasion for the light.

No: it is ill judged and unreasonable, to ascribe this beneficent conduct to the *sun*. Not unto him; not unto him; but unto his *Almighty Maker*, we are obliged, for this noble present, this valuable legacy.

The gracious Author of our being, has so disposed the collection of circumambient air, as to make it productive of this fine and beneficial effect. The sun-beams, falling on the higher parts of the aerial fluid, instead of passing on in strait lines, are bent inward, and inflected to our sight. Their natural course is over-ruled, and they are bidden to wheel about; on purpose to favour us with a welcome and salutary visit.—By which means, the blessing of light, and the season of business, are considerably prolonged. And, what is a very endearing circumstance, prolonged most considerably; when the vehement heats of summer, incline the *student* to postpone his walk, till the temperate evening prevails; when the important labours of the harvest, call the *husbandman* abroad, before the day is fully risen.

AFTER all the ardors of the sultry day, how reviving is this *coolness*!—This gives new *verdure* to the fading plants; new *vivacity* to the withering flowers; and a more exquisite *fragrancy* to their mingled scent.—By this, the *air* also receives a new force, and is qualified to exert itself with greater activity: to brace our limbs; to heave our lungs and co-operate, with a brisker impulse, in perpetuating the circulation of our blood.—This I might call the grand *alembic* of *nature*; which distils her most sovereign *cordial*, the refreshing *dews*. *Incessant heat* would destroy the pearly drops, or oblige them to evaporate in imperceptible exhalations. *Turbulent winds*, or even the gentler motions of *Aurora's* fan, would dissipate the rising vapours, and not suffer them to come to a coagulation. But favoured by the stillness, and condensed by the coolness of the night, they form that *finely-tempered humidity*, which cheers the vegetable world, as sleep exhilarates the animal.

Such are the advantages of *solitude*. The world is a troubled ocean; and who can erect stable purposes, on its fluctuating waves? The world is a school of wrong; and who does not feel himself warping to its pernicious

pernicious influences * ? On this *sea of glass* †, how insensibly we *slide* from our *steadfastness* ! Some *sacred truth*, which was struck in lively characters on our souls, is obscured, if not obliterated. Some *noble resolution*, which Heaven had wrought in our breasts, is shaken, if not overthrown. Some *enticing vanity*, which we had solemnly renounced, again practises its charms, and again captivates our affections. How often has an unwary glance, kindled a fever of irregular desire in our hearts ? How often has a word of applause dropped luscious poison into our ears ; or some disrespectful expression, raised a gust of passion in our bosoms ? Our innocence is of so *tender a constitution*, that it suffers in the promiscuous crowd ; our purity of so *delicate a complexion*, that it scarce touches on the world, without contracting a stain. We see, we hear, with *peril*.

But here *safety* dwells. Every meddling and intrusive avocation is secluded. Silence holds the door against the strife of tongues, and all the impertinences of idle conversation. The busy swarm of vain images and cajoling temptations ; that beset us, with a buzzing importunity, amidst the gaieties of life ; are chased by these thickening shades. — Here I may, without disturbance, commune with my own heart ; and learn that *best of sciences*, to *know myself*. Here the soul may rally her dissipated powers, and grace recover its native energy. — This is the opportunity to rectify the evil impressions, and expel the contagion of corrupting examples. This is the place where I may, with advantage, apply myself to subdue the *rebel within* ; and be master, not of a *sceptre*, but of *myself*. — Throng then, ye ambitious, the *levees* of the powerful ; I will be punctual in my *assignments* with solitude. To a mind intent upon its own improvement, solitude has charms incomparably more en-

* *Nunquam a turba mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid, ex eo quod composui, turbatur ; aliquid, ex his quæ fugavi, reddit. Inimica est multarum conversatio.* Senec.

† Rev. xv. 2.

gaging, than the *entertainments* presented in the theatre; or the *honours* conferred in the *drawing-room*.

I SAID solitude.—But am I then *alone*?—It is true, my acquaintance are at a distance, I have stole away from company, and am remote from all *human* observation.—But that is an alarming thought,

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep *.

Perhaps there may be numbers of those *invisible beings*, patrolling this same retreat; and joining with me in contemplating the Creator's works. Perhaps, those *ministering spirits*, who rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, and hold up the goings of the righteous, may follow us to the lonely recess; and, even in our most *solitary* moments, be our constant *attendants*.—What a pleasing awe is awakened by such a reflection! How venerable it renders my *retired* walks! I am struck with reverence, as under the roof of some *sacred edifice*; or in the *presence-chamber* of some mighty monarch.—O! may I never bring any pride of imagination, nor indulge the least dissolute affection; where such refined and exalted intelligences exercise their watch!

It is *possible*, that I am encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses; but it is *certain*, that God, the *infinite* and *eternal* God, is ever with me. The great JEHOVAH, before whom all the angelic armies bow their heads, and veil their faces, surrounds me; supports me; pervades me. "IN HIM I live, move, and have my being." The whole world is his *august temple*; and in the most *sequestered corner*, I appear before his adorable Majesty, no less than when I worship in his house, or kneel at his altar. In every place, therefore, let me pay him the homage of a heart cleansed from idols, and devoted to his service. In every circumstance, let me feel no *ambition*, but to please him; nor covet any *happiness*, but to enjoy him.

Milt. Par. Lost, B. IV. l. 677.

VOL. II.

T

How

How sublime is the description, and how striking the sentiment, in that noble passage of the Psalms! *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I climb up into the heights of heaven, thou art there inthroned in light. If I go down to the depths of the grave, thou art there also in thy pavilion of darkness. If I retire to the remotest eastern climes, where the morning first takes wing; if, swifter than the darting ray, I pass to the opposite regions of the west, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea* : shall I, in that distant situation, be beyond thy reach; or, by this sudden transition, escape thy notice? So far from it, that could I, with one glance of thought, transport myself beyond all the bounds of creation, I should still be incircled with the immensity of thy essence; or rather, still be inclosed in the hollow of thy hand. Important and delightful truth! let it be interwoven with every thought; and become one with the very consciousness of my existence! that I may continually walk with God, and conduct myself in every step of my behaviour, "as seeing HIM" "that is invisible."*

They are the happy persons; *felicity*, true felicity, is *all their own*; who live under an habitual sense of God's omnipresence, and a sweet persuasion of his special love. If dangers threaten, their impregnable defence is at hand; nothing can be so near to terrify, as their almighty Guardian to secure them. — To these, the hours can never be *tedious*; and it is impossible for them to be *alone*. Do they step aside from the *occupations* of animal life? a more exalted set of employments engage their attention: They address themselves, in all the *various acts* of devotion, to their heavenly Father, *who now sees in secret, and will hereafter reward them openly*. They spread all their wants

* Psal. cxxxix. 7. 8. 9. There is, I think, an additional strength and beauty in the thought; if, with the learned Mr Mudge, we suppose an *antithesis* between the two clauses of this last verse, as there evidently is between those of the preceding; and that they express, in a poetical stile, the extremities of the *East* and the *West*.
before

before his indulgent eye, and disburden all their sorrows into his compassionate bosom.—Do they withdraw from *human society*? they find themselves under the more immediate regards of their Maker. If they resign the satisfactions of social intercourse; it is to cultivate a correspondence with the condescending DEITY, and taste the pleasures of *divine friendship*.—What is such a *state*, but the very suburbs of heaven? What is such a *conduct*, but an antipast of eternal blessedness?

Now, my soul, the *day is ended*. The hours are all fled: they are fled to the supreme Judge, and have given in their evidence. An evidence, registered in heaven, and to be produced at the great audit.—Happy *they*! whose improvement has kept pace with the fleeting minutes. Who have seized them, as they advanced; and engaged them in the *pursuit of wisdom*, or the *service of virtue*.

How is the day gone, almost as soon as it dawned!—The silent moments slip away *insensibly*. No thief steals more unperceived from the pillaged house. Where-ever we are, however employed, time pursues his incessant course. Though *we* are listless and dilatory; the *great measurer* of our *days* presses on; still presses on, in his unwearied career; and whirls our weeks, and months, and years away.—Is it not then surprisingly strange, to hear people complain of the *tediousness* of their time, and how *heavy* it hangs upon their hands? To see them contriving a variety of amusing artifices, to accelerate its flight, and get rid of its burden?—Ah! thoughtless mortals! Why need you urge the headlong torrent? Your days are *swifter* than a *post*; which, carrying dispatches of the last importance, with unremitted speed scours the road. They pass away like the *nimble ships*; which have the wind in their wings, and skim along the watery plain. They hasten to their destined period, with the *rapidity* of an *eagle*; which leaves the stormy blast behind her,

while she cleaves the air, and darts upon her prey *.

And now it is gone, how *short* it appears! When my fond eye beheld it in *perspective*, it seemed a very considerable space. Minutes crouded upon minutes, and hours ranged behind hours, exhibited an extensive plan, and flattered me with a long progression of pleasures. But upon a *retrospective* view, how wonderfully is the scene altered! The landskip, large and spacious, which a *warm fancy* drew, brought to the test of *cool experience*, shrinks into a span. Just as the shores vanish, and mountains dwindle to a spot, when the sailor, surrounded by skies and ocean, throws his last look on his native land.—How clearly do I now discover the cheat! May it never impose upon my unwary imagination again! I find there is nothing abiding on this side eternity. A long duration, in a state of *finite* existence, is *mere illusion*.

Perhaps, the *healthy*, and the *gay*, may not readily credit the serious truth; especially from a young pen, and new to its employ. Let us then refer ourselves to the decision of the *ancient*. Ask some venerable old person, that is just marching off the mortal stage; *How many have been the days of the years of thy life* †? It was a monarch's question, and therefore can want no recommendation, to the fashionable world.—Observe, how he shakes his hoary locks, and, from a deep-felt conviction, replies: "*Fourscore years* have finished their rounds, to furrow these cheeks, and clothe this head in snow. Such a term may seem long and large, to inconsiderate youth. But, oh! how short, how scanty, to one that has made the

* Job ix. 25. 26. By these three very expressive images, the inspired poet represents the *unintermitted* and *rapid* flight of time. The passage is illustrated with great judgment, and equal delicacy, in Dr Grey's most ingenious abridgment of *Scholiens*.—*Quæ tritus in elementis velocissima, hic admirabili cum emphasi congeruntur. In terris, nil perniciosius cursore, & quidem lati quid ferente. Rapidius tamen adhuc vadit, non secant, sed supervolant, navigiola papyro contexta. Omnia rapidissime aerem grandibus alis permetitur aquila, præcipiti lapsu rucit prædam.*

† Gen. xlvii. 8.

“ experiment ? *Short*, as a *gleam* of transient sunshine ;
 “ *scanty*, ‘ as the *shadow* that departeth.’ Methinks,
 “ it was but yesterday, that I exchanged my childish
 “ sports, for manly exercises ; and now, I am resigning
 “ them both, for the sleep of death. As soon as we
 “ are *born*, we begin to draw to our *end* ; and how
 “ small is the interval, between the cradle and the
 “ tomb !”—O ! may we believe this testimony of im-
 mature age ! May every evening bring it, with clearer
 evidence, to our minds ! And may we form such an
 estimate of the *little pittance*, while it is upon the *ad-*
vancing hand ; as we shall certainly make, when the
 sands are all *run down* !

Let me add one reflection on the *work* to be *done*,
 while this shuttle is flying through the loom †. A
 work of no small difficulty, and yet of the utmost con-
 sequence.—Hast thou not seen, hast thou not heard
 of the *excellent* of the *earth* ; who were living images
 of their Maker ? His *divine likeness* was transfused
 into their hearts, and beamed forth in all their con-
 duct. Beamed forth in the *meekness* of *wisdom*, and
purity of *affection* ; in all the *tender offices* of love,
 and all the *noble efforts* of zeal. To be stamp’d with
 the same beautiful signature, and to be followers of
 them, as they were of CHRIST ; *this, this* is thy *busi-*
ness. On the accomplishment of this, thy eternal *all*
 depends. And will an affair of such unspeakable
 weight, admit of a moment’s delay, or consist with
 the least remissness ?—Especially, since much of thy
 appointed time is already elapsed ; and the remainder
 is *all uncertainty*, save only that it is in the very act
 to fly.—Or suppose, thou hadst made a *covenant* with
 the grave, and wast assured of reaching the age of
Methuselah ; how soon would even *such a lease* expire !
 —Extend it, if you please, still farther ; and let it be
 co-existent with *nature* itself : yet, how speedily will
 the consummation of all things commence ! For, yet
 a very little while, and the commissioned archangel

† My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, Job vii. 6.

lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears by the almighty Name, *That time shall be no longer* *. Then, *abused opportunities*, will never return; and *new opportunities*, will never more be offered. Then, should negligent mortals wish, ever so passionately, for a few hours;—a *few moments only*;—to be thrown back from the opening eternity; *thousands of worlds* would not be able to procure the grant.

Shall I now be industrious to *shorten*, what is no longer than a *span*; or to *quicken* the pace, of what is ever on the *wing*? Shall I squander away what is

* This alludes to the beginning of *Revelations* the xth; which, abstracted from its spiritual meaning, and considered only as a state-ly piece of machinery, well deserves our attention; and I will venture to say, has not its *superior*, perhaps not its *equal*, in any of the most celebrated masters of *Greece* and *Rome*.—All that is gloomy or beautiful in the atmosphere, all that is striking or magnificent in every element, is taken in to heighten the idea. Yet nothing is disproportionate; but an uniform air of ineffable Majesty, greatness, exalts, ennobles the whole.—Be pleased to observe the *aspect* of this august personage. All the brightness of the sun shines in his countenance, and all the rage of the fire burns in his feet.—See his *apparel*; the clouds compose his robe, and the drapery of the sky floats upon his shoulders. The rainbow forms his diadem; and that which “compasseth the heaven with a glorious circle,” is the ornament of his head.—Behold his *attitude*. One foot stands on the ocean, and the other rests on the land. The wide-extended earth, and the world of waters, serve as pedestals for these mighty columns.—Consider the *action*. His hand is lifted up to the height of the stars. He speaks; and the regions of the firmament echo with the mighty accents, as the midnight-desert resounds with the lion’s roar. The artillery of the skies is discharged at the signal; a peal of sevenfold thunder spreads the alarm; and prepares the world to receive his orders.—To finish all; and give the highest grandeur, as well as the utmost solemnity, to the representation; hear the decree that issues from his mouth. He *swears by HIM, that liveth for ever and ever*. In whatever manner, so majestic a person had expressed himself; he could not fail of commanding universal attention. But when he confirms his speech, by a most sacred and inviolable oath; we are not only wrapt in silent suspense, but over-whelmed with the profoundest awe.—He swears, *That time shall be no longer*. Was ever voice so full of terror, so big with wonder? It proclaims, not the fall of empires, but the final period of things. It strikes off the wheels of nature, bids ages and generations cease to roll; and, with one potent word, consigns a whole world over to dissolution.

—This is *one*, among a *multitude*, of very sublime and majestic *breaks*, to be found, in that too much neglected book—the *BIBLE*.

unutterably

unutterably important, while it lasts; and, when once departed, is *altogether irrevocable*? O! my soul, forbear the folly; forbear the desperate extravagance. Wilt thou chide as a *loiterer*, the arrow that *boundeth* from the string; or sweep away *diamonds*, as the *refuse* of thy house?—Throw time away! astonishing, ruinous, irreparable profuseness! Throw empires away, and be blameless. But O! be parsimonious of thy days; husband thy precious hours. They go connected; indissolubly connected, with heaven or hell*. *Improved*, they are a sure pledge of everlasting glory; *wasted*, they are a sad preface to never-ending confusion and anguish.

WHAT a *profound silence* has composed the world! so profound is the silence, that my very breath seems a noise! the ticking of my watch is distinctly heard; if I do but stir, it creates a disturbance.—There is, now, none of that confused din, from the tumultuous city: no voice of jovial rustics, from the neighbouring meadow: no chirping melody, from the shady thicket.—Every lip is sealed; not the least whisper invades the air; nor the least motion rustles among the boughs. *Echo* herself sleeps unmolested. The expanded ear, though all attention, catches no sound, but the *liquid lapse* of a murmuring stream.

All things are hush'd, as nature's self lay dead.

If, in the midst of this *deep* and universal *composura*, ten thousand bellowing *thunders* should burst over my head; and rend the skies with their united volleys; O!

* I remember to have seen, upon a sun-dial in a physician's garden at Northampton, the following INSCRIPTION; which, I think, is the most *proper motto*, for the instrument that measures our time; and the most *striking admonition*, which can possibly be given, to every eye that glances upon it;—*Ab hoc Momento pendet Æternitas*.—The weighty sense of which, I know not how to express in English, more happily than in those words of Dr Watts,

Good God! on what a *slender thread*

[Or, on what a *moment of time*].

Hang everlasting things!

how

how should I bear so *unexpected* a shock? It would stun my senses, and confound my thoughts. I should shudder in every limb; and, perhaps, sink to the earth with terror. Consider then, O mortals! consider, what a much more *prodigious* and *amazing* call, will, ere long, alarm your sleeping bones. When the tenants of the tomb have slumbered, in the most undisturbed repose, for a multitude of ages; what an inconceivable consternation must the *shout* of the *archangel*, and the *trump* of God, occasion! Will it not wound the ear of the ungodly; and affright, even to distraction, the impenitent sinner? The stupendous peal will sound through the vast of heaven; will shake the foundations of nature; and pierce even the deepest recesses of the grave. And how, O! how will the *prisoners* of *divine justice*, be able to endure that tremendous *summons*, to a more tremendous *tribunal*?—Do thou, my soul, listen to the *still voice* of the gospel. Attend, in this thy day, to the gracious invitations of thy Saviour. Then, shall that great midnight-cry lose its *horror*, and be *music* to thy ears. It shall be welcome to thy reviving clay, as the tidings of liberty to the dungeon-captive; as the year of jubilee, to the harassed *slave*. This, this shall be its charming import, “*Awake, and sing, ye that dwell “ in dust*.”*

WHAT a general *cessation* of *affairs*, has this dusky hour introduced! A little while ago, all was hurry, hurry. Life and activity exerted themselves, in a thousand busy forms. The city swarmed, with passing and repassing multitudes. All the country was sweet and dust. The air floated in perpetual agitation, by the flitting birds, and humming bees. Art sat prying with her piercing eyes; while *industry* plied her restless hands.—But see; how all this fervent and impetuous bustle, is fled with the setting sun. The beasts are flunk to their grassy couch; and the winged

people are retired to their downy nests. The hammer has resigned its sounding task, and the file ceases to repeat its flying touches. Shut is the well-frequented shop, and its threshold no longer worn by the feet of numerous customers. The village-swain lies drowned in slumbers; and even his trusty dog, who, for a considerable time, stood centry at the door, is extended at his ease, and snores with his master.—In every place, *toil* reclines her head, and *application* folds her arms. All interests seem to be forgot; all pursuits are suspended; all employment is sunk away; sunk away, like the fluttering myriads, that lately sported in the sun's departing rays. It is like the Sabbath of universal nature; or, as though the pulse of life stood still.

Thus will it be with our infinitely momentous concerns; when once *the shadows of the evening*, that long evening which follows the footsteps of death, are stretched over us. The dead cannot seek unto God; the living, the living alone, are possessed of this inestimable opportunity*. “There is no work or device, no repentance or amendment, in the grave †, “whither

* —Nunc, nunc properandus, & acri

Fingendus sine fine rota.—— Pers.

Behold! now is the accepted time. Behold! now is the day of salvation, 2 Cor. vi. 2.

† They who are gone down to the grave, are represented (Is. xxxviii. 11.) by the phrase, חרל יושבי —rendered by *Vitrin-ge*, *Those that inhabit the land of intermission or cessation.*——Which prevents all appearance of *tautology* in the sentence; and is, I think, a valuable improvement of the translation; as it conveys an idea, not only distinct from the preceding, but of a very poetical and very affecting nature; such as was perfectly natural for the royal singer, and royal sufferer, to dwell upon, in his desponding moments.——Thus interpreted, the sense will run; “I shall see man no more; I shall be cut off from the cheerful ways of men, and all the sweets of human society. And what is a farther aggravation of the threatened stroke, I shall, by its taking place, be numbered with those, that inhabit the land of entire cessation and inactivity: where there will be no more possibility, of contributing to the happiness of my kingdom; no more opportunity, of advancing my Creator's glory, or of making my own final salvation sure.”

—A

“whither we are all hasting.” When once that *closing scene* is advanced, we shall have no other part to act on this *earthly theatre*. Then the sluggard, who has slumbered away life in a criminal inactivity, must lie down in hopeless distress, and everlasting sorrow. Then that awful doom will take place, “He that is *holy*, let him be holy still; and he that is *filthy*, let him be filthy for ever.”

Is it so, my soul? Is this the *only, only* time allotted, for obtaining the great reward, and making thy salvation sure? And art thou lulled, in a *vain security*; or dreaming on, in a *supine inadvertency*? Start, O! start from thy trance. Gird up the loins of thy mind, and work while it is day. Improve the present seed-time, that eternity may yield a joyful harvest.—We especially, who are *watchmen* in *Israel*, and *ministers* of the glorious *gospel*; may we be awakened, by this consideration, to all assiduity in our holy office. Some or other of *our people*, are ever and anon departing into the invisible state; all *our friends* are making incessant approaches to their long home; and we *ourselves* shall very shortly be transmitted to the confinement of the tomb. *This* is the favourable juncture, wherein *alone* we can contribute to their endless welfare. This is the crisis, the *all-important crisis*, of their final felicity. Instantly, therefore, let us pour in our wholesome instructions; instantly let us ply them with our earnest exhortations. A moment’s delay may be an irreparable loss; may be an irretrievable ruin. While we procrastinate, a fatal stroke may intervene; and place *us* beyond the power of administering; or place *them* beyond all possibility of receiving any spiritual good*.

How

———A sentiment like *this*, is grand and important; full of piety, and full of benevolence; removes all suspicion of unbecoming pusillanimity, and does the highest honour to the monarch’s character.

* The case represented by the prophet, (1 Kings xx. 40.) seems perfectly applicable, on this occasion. *As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.* So while we are either *remiss* in our function,

How frequently is the face of nature *changed!* and, by changing, made more *agreeable!*—The long-continued glitter of the day, renders the soothing shades of the evening doubly welcome. Nor does the morn ever purple the east with so pleasing a lustre, as after the sullen gloom of a dark and black night.—At present, a *calm* of tranquillity, and undisturbed repose, is spread through the universe. The weary winds have forgot to blow. The gentle gales have fanned themselves asleep. Nothing stirs. Not so much as a single leaf nods. Even the quivering aspin rests. *And not one breath curls o'er the stream.*—Sometimes the *tempest* summons all the forces of the air; and pours itself, with resistless fury, from the angry north. The whole atmosphere is tossed into tumultuous confusion, and the watery world is heaved to the clouds. The astonished mariner, and his straining vessel, now scale the rolling mountain, and hang dreadfully visible on the broken surge: now shoot, with headlong impetuosity, into the yawning gulph; and neither hulk, nor mast, is seen. The storm sweeps over the continent; raves along the city-streets; struggles through the forest-boughs; and terrifies the savage nations, with a howl, more wildly horrid than their own. The knotty oaks bend before the blast; their iron-trunks groan; and their stubborn limbs are dashed to the ground. The lofty dome rocks; and even the solid tower totters on its basis.

Such variations are kindly contrived, with an evident condescension to the fickleness of our taste. Because, a perpetual *similarity* of objects would create a *bold disgust*; therefore, the indulgent Father of our race has diversified the universal scene, and bid every appearance bring with it the *charm* of *novelty*.—But this circumstance is as *beneficial* as it is *entertaining*. Providence, ever gracious to mortals, ever intent up-

laying ourselves out upon *inferior cares*, the people of our charge may be gone;—gone beyond the influence of our *counsels*; beyond the reach of our *prayers*;—gone into the *unchangeable* and eternal state.

on promoting our felicity: has taken care to mingle, in the constitution of things, what is pleasing to our imagination, with what is serviceable to our interests. The piercing winds, and rugged aspect of winter, render the balmy gales, and flowery scenes of spring, peculiarly delightful. At the same time, the keen frosts mellow the soil, and prepare it for the hand of industry. The rushing rains impregnate the glebe, and fit it for a magazine of plenty. The earth is a great *laboratory*; and *December's* cold collects the gross materials, which are *sublimated* by the refining warmth of *May*. The air is a pure *elastic fluid*; and was it always to remain in *this* motionlets *terenity*, it would lose much of its *active spring*; was it never agitated by *those* wholesome *concussions*, it would contract a noisome, perhaps, a pestilential taint. Instead of purifying, it would corrupt the vital juices; and, instead of inhaling refreshments, our respiration might be a source of diseases; or every gasp we draw might be death*.—How then should we admire! Oh! how should we adore that happy union of benignity and wisdom; which, from a *variety* of dispensations, produces an *uniformity* of good; a perpetual succession of delights, and an uninterrupted series of advantages!

The *darkness* is now at its height: and I cannot but

* Considering the immense quantity of coals, and other combustible materials, that are daily consumed, and evaporate into the air. Considering the numberless steams, and clouds of smoke, that almost continually overwhelm populous cities;—the noisome exhalations that arise from thronged infirmaries, and loathsome jails; from stagnating lakes, and putrid fens;—the variety of offensive and unwholesome effluvia, that proceed from other causes;—it is a very remarkable instance of a providence, at once tenderly kind, and infinitely powerful, that *man*kind is not suffocated with stench; that the air is not choked with filth.—The air is the *common sewer*, into which ten thousand times ten thousand nuisances are incessantly discharged; and yet is preserved so *thoroughly clear*, as to afford the most transparent medium for vision; so *delicately undulatory*, as to transmit, with all imaginable distinctness, every diversity of sound; so *perfectly pure*, as to be the constant refiner of the fluids, in every animal that breathes.

admire

admire the obliging manner of its taking place. It comes not with a blunt and *abrupt incivility*, but makes gentle and *respectful advances*. A precipitate transition, from the splendors of day, to all the horrors of midnight, would be both inconvenient and frightful. It would bewilder the traveller in his journey; it would strike the creation with amazement; and, perhaps, be pernicious to the organs of sight. Therefore, the gloom rushes not upon us instantaneously, but increases by slow degrees; and, sending twilight before as its *harbinger*, decently advertises us of its approach. By this means, we are neither alarmed, nor incommoded, by the change; but are able to take all suitable and timely measures for its reception. — Thus graciously has Providence regulated, not only the *grand vicissitudes* of the seasons, but also the *common interchanges* of light and darkness, with an apparent reference to *our comfort*.

Now, the fierce *inhabitants* of the *forest* forsake their dens. A thousand grim forms, a thousand growling monsters, pace the desert. Death is in their jaws, while, stung with hunger, and athirst for blood, they roam their nightly rounds. — O! *unfortunate traveller*, overtaken by the night, in those dismal wilds! How must he stand aghast, at the mingled yell of ravenous throats, and lions roaring after their prey! Defend him, propitious Heaven! or else he must see his endearing spouse, and hail his native home, no more! — Now, the prowling wolf, like a murderous ruffian, dogs the shepherd's footsteps, and besets his bleating charge. The fox, like a crafty felon, steals to the thatched cottage, and carries off the feathered booty.

Happy for the world, were these the only destroyers that walk in darkness. But alas! there are *savages* in *human shape*; who, muffled in shades, infest the abodes of civilized life. The *sons of violence* make choice of this season*, to perpetrate the most out-

————— When Night

Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.

U

Milton.

rageous

rageous acts of wrong and robbery. The *adulterer* waiteth for the twilight; and, baser than the villain on the highway, betrays the honour of his bosom-friend. Now, *faction* forms her close cabals, and whispers her traiterous insinuations. Now, *rebellion* plans her accursed plots, and prepares the train to blow a nation into ruin. Now, crimes, that hide their odious heads in the day, haunt the seats of society, and stalk through the gloom with audacious front. Now, the *vermin* of the *streets* crawl from their lurking holes, to wallow in sin, and feed on the venom of the night. Each soothing himself with the *fond notion*; That all is safe; That *no eye sees*.

And are they then concealed? Preposterous madmen! To draw the curtain between their infamous practices, and a *little set* of mortals; but lay them open, to all these chaste and *wakeful eyes* of Heaven*. Are they then concealed? No, truly; were these vigilant luminaries closed; an eye *keener* than the lightning's flash, *brighter* than ten thousand suns, beholds their every motion. Their *thickest shades* are beaming *day*†, to the jealous Inspector, and supreme Judge of human actions.—Deluded creatures! have ye not heard, have ye not read, “That clouds and darkness “are his majestic residence ‡?” In that very gloom, to which you fly for covert, he erects his throne. What you reckon your *screen*, is the *bar* of his *tribunal*. O! remember this: stand in awe, and sin not. Remember, that the great and terrible God is *about your path*||, when you take your midnight range; is *about your bed*, when you indulge the loose desire;

* ——— *Sed luna videt, sed sidera testes
Intendunt oculos.*

† This is finely and very forcibly expressed, by the Psalmist: *If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me, then shall my night be turned into day: or, as it may be rendered somewhat more emphatically, Even the night shall be broad day-light all around me, Psal. cxxxix. 10.*

‡ Psal. xcvi. 2.

|| The original words are much stronger than the translation *ורית* and *חסבנתח* signify, Thou *sistest* my path; and art *familiarly*, or *intimately*, acquainted with all my ways. The former, apprehend

and spies out all your ways, be they ever so secretly conducted, or artfully disguised.

SOME minutes ago, a passenger crossed along the road. His horse's foot struck the ground, and fetched fire from a flint. My eye, though at a distance, caught the view; and saw, with *great clearness*, the bright sparkles: of which, had I been ever so near, I should not have discerned the *least glimpse* under the blaze of day.—So *, when sickness has drawn a *veil* over the gaiety of our hearts; when misfortunes have *eclipsed* the splendor of our outward circumstances; how many *important convictions* present themselves with the brightest evidence! Under the sunshine of prosperity they lay undiscovered; but, when some intervening cloud has darkened the scene, they emerge out of their obscurity, and even glitter upon our minds. Then the *world*, that delusive cheat, confesses her emptiness: but JESUS, the bright and morning star, beams forth with inimitable lustre. Then *vice* loses all her fallacious allurements; that painted strumpet is horrible as the hags of hell: but *virtue*, despised virtue, gains loveliness from a luring providence, and treads the shades with more than mortal charms.—May this reconcile me, and all the sons of sorrow, to our appointed share of suffering! If tribulation tend to dissipate the inward darkness, and pour heavenly day upon our minds; welcome di-

apprehend, denoting the *exact* cognizance which the Almighty taketh; the latter implying the *constant* inspection which he exerciseth; over all the circumstances of our conduct, Psal. cxxxix. 2.

* I beg leave to inform the *young gentleman*, whose name dignifies my dedication; that *this* was a remark of his honoured father, when we rode together, and conversed in a dusky evening. I mention this circumstance, partly, to secure the paragraph from contempt; partly, to give him, and the world, an idea of that eminently serious tale, which distinguished my deceased friend.—The *less obvious* reflection, the more clearly it discovers a turn of mind remarkably spiritual; which would suffer nothing to escape, without yielding some religious improvement: and the *meaner* the incident, the more admirable was that fertility of imagination, which could deduce the noblest truths from the most trivial occurrences.

stresses; welcome disappointment; welcome whatever our froward flesh, or peevish passions, would miscale calamities. *These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall sit easy upon our spirits; since they befriend our knowledge; promote our faith; and so, "work out for us, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*."*

How has this *darkness* snatched every splendid and graceful object from my sight! It has dashed the sponge over the pictures of spring, and destroyed all the *delicate distinctions* of things. Where are now the fine tinges, that so lately charmed me from the glowing parterre? The blush is struck out, from the cheeks of the rose; and the snowy hue is dropt from the lily. I cast my eyes toward a magnificent seat; but the aspiring columns, and fair-expanded front, are mingled in rude confusion. Without the sun, all the *elegance* of the blooming world is a *mere blank*; all the *symmetry* of architecture a *shapeless heap*.

Is not this an expressive emblem of the *loveliness* which the *Sun of righteousness* transfuses into all that is amiable? Was it not for JESUS, and his *merits*, I should sigh with anguish of spirit; even while I rove through ranks of the most beautiful flowers, or breathe amidst a wilderness of sweets. Was it not for JESUS, and his *merits*, I should roam like some *disconsolate specter*, even through the smiles of creation, and the caresses of fortune. My conversation, in this world,

* 2 Cor. iv. 17. The great *Stephens*, that oracle of *Grecian* learning, translates our apostle's phrase—*καθ' υπερβολην*, *Quo nihil majus dici aut fingi potest*. But how does the sense rise! how is the idea enlarged, under two such forcible expressions!—The whole verse is a masterpiece of the beautiful *antithesis*, the lively *description*, and the nervous *distinction*. It is one of those noble passages in the inspired writings, which, like some rich *aromatic plants*, cannot be transferred from their own generous and native soil, without being impaired in their vivacity, and losing much of their delicacy. Perhaps the following version may be somewhat less injurious to the sacred original, than the common translation;—*Our very light affliction, which is but just for the present moment, worketh out a far more exceeding, an incomparably great, and eternal weight of glory.*

though

though dressed in the most engaging forms of external pleasure, would be like the passage of a *condemned malefactor*, through enamelled meadows, and bowers of bliss, to be broke upon the wheel, or tortured to death upon the rack. But a *daily reflection* on the LAMB's atoning blood; a *comfortable trust*, that my soul is reconciled through this glorious expiation; this is the ray, the golden ray, that irradiates the face of the universe. This is the *oil of beauty*, which makes all things wear a chearful aspect; and the *oil of gladness*, which disposes the spectator to behold them with delight *. This, this is the sacred charm, that teaches nature, in all her operations, so exquisitely to please.

"MAN goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, "till the evening." But then his strength fails; his spirits flag; and he stands in need, not only of some *respite from toil*, but of some kindly and sovereign *refreshments*.—What an admirable provision for this purpose, is *sleep*! Sleep introduces a most welcome vacation, both for the soul and body. The exercises of the brain, and the labours of the hands, are at once discontinued. So that the *weary limbs* repair their exhausted vigour: while the *pensive thoughts* drop their load of sorrows, and the *busy* ones rest from the fatigue of intense application. —Most reviving cordial! Equally beneficial to our animal and intellectual

* Thus applied, that fine piece of *flattery*, addressed to the *Heavenly* emperor, is strictly and literally *true*.

——*Vultus ubi tuus*
Affulsu populo, gratior it dies,
Et soles melius nitent.

HÖR.

Which I would cast in a *Christian* mould, and thus translate:

When faith presents the Saviour's death,
And whispers, "This is thine;"
Sweetly my rising hours advance,
And peacefully decline.

While such my views, the radiant sun
Sheds a more sprightly ray;
Each object smiles; all nature charms;
Ling'ring my cares away.

U 3

powers.

36 CONTEMPLATIONS

powers. It supple the *fleshy machine*, and keeps all its nice movements in a proper posture for easy play. It animates the *thinking faculties* with fresh alacrity, and rekindles their ardour for the studies of the dawn. Without these enlivening recruits, how soon would the most robust constitution, be wasted into a *walking-skeleton*; and the most learned sage, degenerate into a *hoary idiot*!—Sometime ago, I beheld with surprize, poor *Florio*. His air was wild; his countenance meagre; his thoughts roving, and speech disconcerted. Inquiring the cause of this strange alteration, I was informed, that, for several nights, he had not closed his eyes in sleep. For want of which *noble restorative*; that sprightly youth, who was once the life of the discourse; and the darling of the company; is become a spectacle of misery and horror.

How many of my fellow-creatures are, at this very instant, confined to the *bed of languishing*; and complaining, with that illustrious sufferer of old, *Wea-ri-some nights are appointed to me* *! Instead of indulging soft repose, they are counting the tedious hours; telling every striking clock; or measuring the very moments, by their throbbing pulse. How many, *harassed with pain*, most passionately long to obtain some little truce from their agonies, in peaceful slumbers! How many, *sick with disquietude*, and restless even on their downy pillows, would purchase this transient oblivion of their woes almost at any rate!—That which wealth cannot procure, which multitudes sigh for in vain, thy God has bestowed on thee times out of number. The *welcome visitant*, punctual at the needed hour, has entered thy chamber, and poured his poppies round thy couch; has gently closed thy eye-lids, and shed his slumbrous dews over all thy senses.

Since sleep is so absolutely necessary; so inestimably valuable; observe, what a *fine apparatus* almighty goodness has made, to accommodate us with the

Sleepy blessing. With how kind a precaution, he removes whatever might obstruct its access, or impede its influence! He draws around us the *curtain of darkness*; which inclines us to a drowsy indolence, and conceals every object that might too strongly agitate the sense. He conveys *peace* into our *apartments*; and imposes silence on the whole creation. Every animal is bidden to tread softly, or rather to cease from its motion, when man is retiring to his repose. —May we not discern in this gracious disposition of things, the *tender cares* of a *nursing-mother*; who hushes every noise, and secludes every disturbance, when she has laid the child of her love to rest? So, by such soothing circumstances, and gently working opiates, *He giveth to his beloved sleep* *.

Another signal instance of a Providence intent upon our welfare, is, that we are preserved *safe* in the hours of *slumber*. How are we then lost to all apprehension of danger; even though the murderer be at our bedside, or his naked sword at our breast! Destitute of all concern for ourselves, we are unable to *think of*, much more to *provide for*, our own security. At these moments therefore, we lie open to innumerable perils: perils from the resistless rage of *flames*: perils from the insidious artifices of *thieves*, or the outrageous violence of *robbers*; without either vigilance to observe the foe, or strength to resist the assault: perils, from the *irregular workings* † of our own thoughts, and

* Psal. cxxvii. 2.

† I think, it is referable only to a superintending and watchful *providence*, that we are not hurried, when our imagination is heated, and our reason stupified by dreams, into the most *pernicious* actions. —We have sometimes heard of unfortunate persons, who, walking in their sleep, have thrown themselves headlong from a window, and been dashed to death on the pebbles. And whence is it, that such disastrous accidents are only *related* as pieces of news, not experienced by ourselves, or our families? Were our minds more sober in their operations, or more circumspect in their regards? No, verily; nothing could be more wild, than their excursions; none more inattentive to their own welfare. Therefore, if *we have laid us down, and slept in peace*; it was, because the LORD vouchsafed us the

and especially from the incursions of our spiritual enemy. What dreadful mischief might that restless, that implacable *adversary of mankind* work, were there not an invisible hand to controul his rage, and protect poor mortals! what scenes of horror might he represent to our imaginations, and "scare us with "dreams, or terrify us with visions *!" But the *Keeper of Israel*, who never slumbers nor sleeps, interposes in our behalf; at once to *cherish* us under his wings, and to *defend* us as with a *shield*. It is said of *Solomon*, "That threescore valiant men were about his "bed; all expert in war; every one with his sword "upon his thigh, because of fear in the night †." But one greater than *Solomon*; one mightier than myriads of armed hosts; even the great JEHOVAH, in whom is everlasting strength; he vouchsafes to watch over our sleeping minutes, and to stop all the avenues of ill.—Oh! the unwearied and condescending *goodness* of our Creator! who *lulls* us to *rest*, by bringing on the silent shades; and *plants* his own ever-watch-

the sweet refreshment; if we *rose again* in safety; it was, because the *LORD* *sustained* us with his unremitted protection.

Will the candid reader excuse me, if I add a short story, or rather a *matter of fact*, which I know to be true?—Two persons that had been hunting together in the day, slept together the following night. One of them was renewing the pursuit in his dream; and, having run the whole circle of the chase, came, at last, to the fall of the stag. Upon this, he cries out with a determined ardor; *I'll kill him: I'll kill him:* and immediately feels for the knife, which he carried in his pocket. His companion, happening to be awake, and observing what passed, leaped from the bed; and being secure from danger, stood (for the moon shined into the room) to view the event. When, to his inexpressible surprise, the infatuated sportsman gave several deadly stabs, in the very place, where, a moment before, the throat and the life of his friend lay.—This I mention, as a proof, that nothing hinders us, even from being *assassins of others*; or *murderers of ourselves*; amidst the *mad sallies of sleep*; only the *preventing care of our heavenly Father*.

* What a complete master that malignant spirit is, in exhibiting *visionary representations*, appears from his conduct towards CHRIST on the high mountain; and that he is too ready, if not restrained by an over-ruling power, to employ his dexterity in *assisting mankind*, is evident from his treatment of *Job*. See Luke iv. 5. Job vii. 14.

† Cant. iii. 7, 8.

ful eye as our *centinel*, while we enjoy the needful repose.

REASON, now, resigns her sedate office; and fancy, extravagant fancy, leads the mind through a maze of *vanity*. The head is crowded with false images, and tantalized with the most ridiculous misapprehensions of things. Some are expatiating amidst *fairy-fields*, and gathering garlands of visionary bliss; while their bodies are stretched on a wisp of straw, and sheltered by the cob-webs of a barn. Others, quite insensible of their rooms of state, are mourning in a *doleful dungeon*, or struggling with the raging billows. Perhaps, with hasty steps, they climb the craggy cliff; and, with *real* anxiety, fly from the *imaginary* danger. Or else, benumbed with sudden fear, and finding themselves unable to escape, they give up at once their hopes, and their efforts; and though reclined on a couch of ivory, are sinking, all helpless and distressed, in the furious whirlpool. So unaccountable are the *vagaries* of the *brain*, while sleep maintains its dominion over the limbs!

But is this the only season, when absurd and incoherent irregularities play their magic on our minds? Are there not those who *dream*, even in their *waking* moments?—Some pride themselves in a notion of *superior excellency*, because the royal favour has annexed a few splendid titles to their names; or because the dying silk-worm has bequeathed her finest threads, to cover their nakedness.—Others congratulate their own *signal happiness*, because loads of golden lumber are amassed together in their coffers; or promise themselves a most superlative felicity indeed, when some thousands more are added to the useless heap.—Nor are there wanting others, who gape after *substantial* satisfaction from *airy* applause; and flatter themselves with, I know not what, immortality in the momentary buz of renown. Are any of these a whit more reasonable in their *opinions*, than the poor ragged wretch in his *reveries*; who, while snoring under a hedge,

hedge, exults in the possession of his stately palace, and sumptuous furniture?—If persons who are *very vassals* to their own domineering passions, and led captive by numberless temptations: if these persons pique themselves with a conceit of their *liberty*, and fancy themselves the *generous* and *gallant* spirits of the age; where is the difference between theirs and the madman's phrensy; who, though *chained* to the floor, is *throned* in thought, and wielding an imaginary sceptre?—In a word, as many as borrow their dignity from a plume of feathers, or the gaudy trappings of fortune; as many as send their souls to seek for bliss in the blandishments of sense, or in any thing short of the divine favour, and a well-grounded hope of the incorruptible inheritance*; what are they, but dreamers with their eyes open; *delirious*, though in *health*?

Would you see their *picture*, drawn to the very life, and the success of their *schemes* calculated with the utmost *exactness*; cast your eye upon that fine representation, exhibited by the prophet: *It shall be even as when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite* †. Such is the *race*, and such the *prize*, of all those *candidates* for *honour* and *joy*; who run wide of the mark of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. They live in vanity, and die in woe.—Awaken us, merciful LORD, from these *noon-tide trances*. Awaken us, while conviction may turn to our advantage, and not serve only to increase our torment. O let our “eyes be enlightened, to discern the things that are excellent;” and no longer be imposed upon by fantastic appearances, which, however *pompous* they may seem, will prove more *empty* than the vi-

* These give a sacred, and home-felt delight,
A sober certainty of waking bliss.

Milt. Comus.

† Is. xxix. 8.

sons of the night, more *transient* than the dream that is forgotten.

HAVING mentioned *sleep* and *dreams*, let me once again consider those remarkable incidents of our frame; so very remarkable, that I may venture to call them a kind of experimental *mystery*, and little less than a standing *miracle*.—Behold the most *vigorous constitution*, when stretched on the bed of ease, and totally resigned to the slumbers of the night. Its activity is oppressed with fetters of indolence; its strength is consigned over to a temporary annihilation; the nerves are like a bow unstrung, and the whole animal system like a motionless log.—Behold a person of the most *delicate sensations*, and *amiable dispositions*. His eyes, though thrown wide open, admit not the visual ray, at least, distinguish not objects. His ears, with the organs unimpaired, and articulate accents beating upon the drum, perceive not the sound; at least, apprehend not the meaning. The senses, and their exquisitely fine feelings, are overwhelmed with an unaccountable stupefaction. You call him a *social creature*; but where are his social affections? He knows not the father that begat him; and takes no notice of the friend, that is as his own soul. The wife of his bosom may expire by his side, and he lie unconcerned as a barbarian. The children of his body may be tortured with the severest pangs; and he, even in the same chamber, remain untouched with the least commiseration.——Behold the most *ingenious scholar*: whose judgment is piercing, and able to trace the most intricate difficulties of science; his taste refined, and quick to relish all the beauties of sentiment and composition. Yet, at this juncture, the thinking faculties are unhinged, and the intellectual economy quite disconcerted. Instead of close connected reasonings, nothing but a disjointed huddle of absurd ideas; instead of well-digested principles, nothing but a disorderly jumble of crude conceptions. The most palpable delusions, impose upon his imagination.

nation. The whole night passes, and he frequently mistakes it for a single minute : is not sensible of the transition, hardly sensible of any duration.

Yet, no sooner does the morning draw back his curtain, and day-light fill the room, but he awakes, and finds himself *possessed* of all the valuable endowments ; which, for several hours, were *suspended* or *lost*. He feels his sinews braced, and fit for action : his senses are alert and keen. The frozen affections melt with tenderness : the romantic visionary brightens into the master of reason. And what is beyond measure surprising, the intoxicated mind works itself sober, not by *slow degrees* : but in the *twinkling* of an eye, recovers from its perturbation.—Why does not the numbness, that seizes the animal powers, continue ; and chain the limbs in a perpetual listless inability ? Why does not the stupor that deadens all the nice operations of the senses, hold fast its possession ? When the thoughts are once disadjusted, why are they not always in confusion ? How is it that they are rallied in a moment ; and, from the wildest irregularity, reduced to the most orderly array ?—From an *inactivity*, resembling death ; and from *extravagancies*, little differing from madness ; how is the body so *suddenly* restored to vigour and agility ? How is the understanding *instantaneously* re-established, in sedateness and harmony ?—Surely, “ this is “ the LORD’s doing, and it should be marvellous in “ our eyes ;” should awaken our gratitude, and inspire our praise.

THIS is the time in which *ghosts* are supposed to make their appearance. Now the *timorous imagination* teems with phantoms, and creates numberless terror to itself. Now dreary forms, in fullen state, stalk along the gloom ; or, swifter than lightning, glide across the shades. Now voices more than mortal * are

* *Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita silentes
Ingens, & simulacra modis pallentia miris
Visa sub obscurum noctis.*—

heard from the echoing vaults, and groans issue from the hollow tombs. Now melancholy spectres visit the ruins of ancient monasteries, and frequent the solitary dwellings of the dead. They pass and repass in unsubstantial images, along the forsaken galleries; or take their determined stand over some lamented grave.—How often has the schoolboy fetched a long circuit, and trudged many a needless step, in order to avoid the haunted *church-yard*? Or, if necessity, sad necessity, has obliged him to cross the spot, where *human skulls* are lodged below, and the *baleful* *yews* shed supernumerary horrors above; a thousand hideous stories rush into his memory: fear adds wings to his feet; he scarce touches the ground; dares not once look behind him; and blesses his good fortune, if no frightful sound purred at his heels, if no ghastly shape bolted upon his sight*.

It is strange to observe the excessive timidity, that possesses many peoples minds on this *fanciful occasion*; while they are void of all concern on others of the most *tremendous import*. Those, who are startled, in any dark and lonely walk, at the *very apprehension* of a single spectre, are nevertheless unimpressed at the *sure prospect* of entering into a whole world of disembodied beings. Nay, are without any emotions of awe, though they know themselves to be hastening into the presence of the great, infinite, and eternal Spirit.—Should some pale messenger from the regions of the dead, draw back our curtains at the hour of midnight; and, appointing some particular place, say, as the horrid apparition to *Brutus*, *I'll meet thee there*†: I believe, the boldest heart would feel something like a panic; would seriously think upon the adventure, and be in pain for the event. But when a voice from

* See that valuable poem, titled THE GRAVE.

† The story of *Brutus*, and his *evil genius*, is well known. Nor must it be denied, that the precise words of the spectre to the hero were, *I'll meet thee at Philippi*. But, as this would not answer my purpose, I was obliged to make an alteration in the circumstance of place.

heaven cries, in the awakening language of the prophet, *Prepare to meet thy GOD, O Israel* *; how little is the warning regarded! how soon is it forgot! Preposterous stupidity! To be *utterly unconcerned*, where it is the truest wisdom to take the alarm; and to be *all trepidation*, where there is nothing really terrible! — Do thou, my soul, remember thy Saviour's admonition; “I will forewarn you, whom you shall fear. Fear not these imaginary horrors of the night; but fear that awful Being; whose revelation of himself, though with expressions of peculiar mercy, made *Moses*, his favourite servant, tremble exceedingly: whose manifestation, with purposes of inexorable vengeance, will make *mighty conquerors*, that were familiar with dangers, and estranged to dismay; call upon the mountains to fall on them, and the rocks to cover them: the menace of whose majestic eye, when he comes attended with thousand thousands of his immortal hosts, will make the very heavens cleave asunder, and the world flee away.—O! dread his *displeasure*; secure his *favour*; and then thou mayst commit all thy other *anxieties* to the wind; thou mayst laugh at every other fear.”

This brings to my mind a memorable and amazing occurrence, recorded in the book of Job †: which is, I think, no inconsiderable proof of the *real existence* of apparitions ‡, on some *very extraordinary* emergencies;

* Amos iv. 12.

† Job iv. 12. 14. &c.

‡ *Proof of the real existence of apparitions*,—if the sense in which I have always understood this passage be true.—*Eliphaz*, I apprehend, was neither in a trance, nor in a dream, but perfectly awake.—Though he speaks of sleep; he speaks of it, as fallen not upon *himself*, but upon *other men*. He does not mention *dreams*, though חִלּוּמִים *Somnia*, would have suited the verse (if the book be in metre) altogether as well as חִזְיוֹנִים *Visiones*.—It could not, I think, be a *wind*, as some translate the word רֵוַח. Because, the circumstance of *standing still*, is not so compatible, with the nature of a wind; and a wind would have passed *above* him; all around him, as well as *before* him; not to add, how low a remark it is, and how unworthy of a place in so august a description, that he

gencies; while it discountenances those legions of idle tales, which superstition has raised, and credulity received. Since it teaches us, that if, at any time, those visitants from the unknown world, render themselves perceivable by mortals, it is not upon any errand of frivolous consequence; but, to convey intelligences of the utmost moment, or to work impressions of the highest advantage.

It was in the *dead of night*. All nature lay shrouded in darkness. Every creature was buried in sleep. The most profound silence reigned through the universe. In these solemn moments, *Eliphaz* alone, all wakeful and solitary, was musing upon sublime and heavenly subjects.—When, lo! an awful being, from the invisible realms, burst into his apartment *. *A spirit passed before his face.* Astonishment seized the beholder. His bones shivered within him; his flesh trembled all over him; and the hair of his head stood erect with horror.—Sudden, and unexpected, was the appearance of the phantom; but not such its departure. *It stood still*, to present itself more fully to his view. It made a solemn pause, to prepare his

could not discern the form of a wind.—It seems, therefore, to have been a real spirit; either angelical, as were those, which presented themselves to *Abraham* resting at the door of his tent, and to *Lot* sitting in the gate of *Sodom*; or else, the spirit of some departed saint, as in the case of *Samuel's* apparition, or the famous appearance of *Moses* and *Elijah* on the mount of transfiguration.—A spirit, assuming some vehicle, in order to become visible to the human eye. Which, accordingly, *Eliphaz* saw, exhibiting itself as an object of sight. But saw so obscurely and indistinctly, as not to be able, either to describe its aspect, or to discern whom it resembled.

* I have given this solemn picture a modern dress, rather for the sake of variety and illustration, than from any apprehension of improving the admirable original. Such an attempt, I am sensible, would be more absurd, than to lacquer gold, or paint the diamond. The description, in *Eliphaz's* own language, is awful and affecting to the last degree. A *Night-piece*, dressed in all the circumstances of the deepest horror. I question, whether *Shakespeare* himself, though so peculiarly happy, for his great command of terrifying images, has any thing superior or comparable to this. The judges of fine composition see the masterly strokes; and, I believe, the most ordinary reader feels them, chilling his blood, and awakening emotions of dread in his mind.

mind for some momentous message.—After which, a voice was heard. A voice, for the importance of its meaning, worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance; for the solemnity of its delivery, enough to alarm a heart of stone. It spoke; and this was the purport of its words:—" *Shall man, frail and wretched man, be just before the mighty GOD? Shall even the most upright and accomplished of mortals be pure in the sight of his Maker*? Behold, and consider it attentively. He put no such trust in his most exalted servants, as should bespeak them altogether incapable of defect, or authorise them to arrogate any honour to themselves. And his very angels, without the least injury to their character, he charged with folly; as sinking, even in the highest perfection of their holiness, infinitely beneath his transcendent glories; as falling, even in all the fidelity of their obedience, inexpressibly short of the homage due to his most adorable Majesty. And, if angelic natures must not presume to justify either themselves, or their services, before immaculate and uncreated purity; how much less doth such a carriage become them, that dwell in houses of clay; whose original is from the dust, and whose state is all imperfection!*"

I would observe from hence, the very singular necessity of that *poverty of spirit*, which entirely renounces its own attainments; and, consequently, submits to the righteousness of the incarnate God. To inculcate this lesson, the Son of the Blessed came down from heaven; and pressed no other principle, with so

* There seems to be a significant and beautiful gradation in the Hebrew words **שׁוֹנֵא** and **רָכַח**, which I have endeavoured to preserve, by a sort of *paraphrastic version*.—The reader will observe a new turn given to the sentiment, and much nobler than that which our English translation exhibits. The passage, thus rendered, speaks a truth incomparably more weighty, and needful to be inculcated. A truth, exactly parallel to that humbling confession of the prophet, *We are all as an unclean thing*; and to that solemn declaration of the Psalmist, *In thy sight shall no man living be justified*. Vid. Schult. in loc.

repeated * an importunity, on his hearers. To instil the same doctrine, the HOLY GHOST touched the lips of the apostles with sacred eloquence; and made it an eminent part of their commission, "to bring down every high imagination." That no expedient might be wanting, to give it a deep and lasting efficacy on the human mind; a phantom arises from the valley of the shadow of death, or a teacher descends from the habitation of spirits.—Whatever then we neglect; let us not neglect to cultivate *this grace*, which has been so variously taught, so powerfully enforced.

HARK! a *doleful voice*—With sudden starts, and hideous screams, it disturbs the silence of the peaceful night. It is the *screech-owl*, sometimes in frantic, sometimes in disconsolate accents, uttering her woes †. She flies the vocal grove, and shuns the society of all the feathered choir. The blooming gardens, and flowery meads, have no charms for her. Obscure shades, ragged ruins, and walls overgrown with ivy, are her favourite haunts. Above, the mouldering precipice nods, and threatens a fall; below, the toad crawls, or the poisonous adder hisses. The sprightly morning, which awakens other animals into joy, administers no pleasure to this *gloomy recluse*. Even the smiling face of day is her aversion; and all its lovely scenes create nothing but uneasiness.

So, just so, would it fare with the *ungodly*; were it possible to suppose their admission, into the chaste and

* It is well worthy of our observation, says an excellent commentator, That no one sentence uttered by our LORD, is so frequently repeated as this; *Whoever shall exalt himself, shall be abused; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted*; which concurs at least ten times in the Evangelists.

† *Solique culminibus, fersili carmine bulo
Sape queri, longasque in flutem ducere voces.*

Thus sung that charming genius, that prince of the ancient poets, that most consummate master of elegance and accuracy; all whose sentiments are nature, whose every description is a picture, whose whole language is music.—*Virgil.*

bright *abodes* of endless *felicity*. They would find nothing but disappointment and shame, even at the fountain-head of happiness and honour. For how could the tongue, habituated to *profaneness*, taste any delight in joining the harmonious adorations of heaven? How could the lips, cankered with *slander*, relish the raptures of everlasting praise? Where would be the satisfaction of the *vain beauty*, or the *supercilious grandee*? Since, in the temple of the skies, no incense of flattery would be addressed to the one; nor any obsequious homage paid to the other. The transcendent and immaculate purity of the blessed God, would *flash confusion* on the lascivious eye. And the envious mind, must be on a *rack* of self-tormenting *passions*; to observe millions of happy beings, shining in all the perfections of glory, and solacing themselves in the fulness of joy. In short, the unsanctified soul, amidst holy and triumphant spirits; even in the refined regions of bliss and immortality; would be like this melancholy bird, *dislodged* from her darksome retirement, and *imprisoned* under the beams of day*.

The voice of this creature, screaming at our windows, or of the raven croaking over our roof, is, they say, a *token* of approaching *death*. There are persons who would regard such an incident, with no small degree of solicitude. Trivial as it is; it would

* I cannot forbear taking notice, with what admirable *emphasis* and *propriety* our LORD touches this important point, in his memorable conference with *Nicodemus*. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*; q. d. "I waive the *authority* of the supreme Judge, and speak with the instructive *condescension* of a master in *Israel*. Though I might, without being liable to the least controul, pass it into a sovereign decree; that unrenewed mortals, who are slaves to corrupt appetites, **SHALL NOT** enter the habitations of the just; I rather choose to represent it, as a case utterly *impossible*; and charge the calamity, not upon *divine severity*, but *human folly*. Such persons, from the very nature of things, preclude themselves; they incapacitate their own minds; and contrarieties must be reconciled, before they, in their unregenerate condition, can be partakers of those spiritual and sublime delights." John iii. 3;

ON THE NIGHT.

49

damp their spirits, and perhaps break their rest.—One cannot but wonder, that people should suffer themselves to be affrighted at such *santastical*, and yet be quite unaffected with *real* presages of their dissolution. Real presages of this awful event, address us from every quarter. What are these *incumbent glooms*, that overwhelm the world, but a kind of *pall* provided for nature; and an image of that long night, which will quickly cover the inhabitants of the whole earth? What an affinity has the sleep *, which will very soon weigh down my drowsy eye-lids, with that state of entire cessation, in which all my senses must be laid aside! The silent chamber, and the bed of slumber, are a very significant representative of the land where all things are hushed; all things are forgotten.—What meant that deep *death-bell note*, which the other evening, saddened the air? Laden with heaviest accents, it struck our ears, and seemed to knock at the door of our hearts. Surely, it brought a message to surviving mortals, and thus the tidings ran: "Mortals, the destroyer of your race is on his way. The last enemy has begun the chase; and is gaining ground upon you every moment. His paths are strewed with heaps of slain. Even now, his javelin has laid one of your neighbours in the dust; and will soon, very soon, aim the *inevitable blow* at every one of your lives."

We need not go down to the charnel house, nor carry our search into the repositories of the dead; in order to find memorials of our impending doom. A multitude of these remembrancers are planted in all our paths, and point the heedless passengers to their long-home. I can hardly enter a considerable town, but I meet the funeral-procession, or the mourners going about the streets. The *atchievement* suspended on the wall, or the *rape* streaming in the air, are silent intimations; that both *rich* and *poor* have been emptying their houses, and replenishing their se-

* *Es consanguineus Leti sopor.*

Virg.
pulchres.

pulchres. I can scarce join in any conversation, but mention is made of some that are given over by the physician, and hovering on the confines of eternity; of others, that have just left their clay amidst weeping friends, and are gone to appear before the Judge of all the earth. There is not a *newspaper* comes to my hand, but, amidst all its entertaining narrations, reads several serious *lectures* of *mortality*. What else are the repeated accounts, of age, worn out by slow consuming sicknesses; and of youth, dashed to pieces by some sudden stroke of casualty? Of patriots, exchanging their seats in the senate, for a lodging in the tomb; of misers, resigning their breath, and (O! relentless destiny!) leaving their very riches for others?—Even these vehicles of our amusement, are registers of the deceased; and the voice of *fame* seldom sounds, but in concert with a *knell*.

These monitors croud every place; not so much as the scenes of our diversions excepted. What are the decorations of our public buildings, and the most elegant furniture of our parlours; but the imagery of death, and trophies of the tomb? That marble bust; and those gilded pictures; how solemnly they *recognize* the fate of others, and speakingly *remind* us of our own!—I see; I hear; and Oh! I *feel*, this great truth. It is interwoven with my constitution. The frequent decays of the structure, foretel its final ruin. What are all the pains, that have been darted through my limbs; what every disease, that has assailed my health; but the *advanced guards* of the foe? What are the languors and weariness, that attend the labours of each revolving day; but the more *secret practices* of the adversary, slowly undermining the earthly tabernacle.

Amidst so many notices, shall we go on thoughtless and unconcerned? Can none of these prognostics, which are sure as oracles, awaken our attention, and engage our circumspection? *Noah*, it is written, *being warned of GOD, prepared an ark*. O! imitate this excellent example. Admonished by such a cloud
of

of witnesses, be continually putting thyself in a readiness for the last change. Let not that day, of which thou hast so many infallible signs, come upon thee unawares.—Get the *ivy untwined*, and thy affections disentangled from this enchanting world; that thou mayst be able to quit it without reluctance. Get the dreadful *handwriting cancelled*, and all thy sins blotted out; that thou mayst depart in peace, and have nothing to fear at the decisive tribunal. Get; O! get thy soul *interested* in the Redeemer's merits, and *transformed* into his sacred image; then shalt thou be meet for the inheritance of saints in light, and mayst even desire to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST.

SOMETIMES, in my evening-walk, I have heard

———*The wakeful bird*

*Sing darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tune her nocturnal note*.*

How different the *airs* of this charming songster, from those harsh and boding *outcries*! The little creature ran through all the variations of music; and shewed herself mistress of every grace, that constitutes or embellishes harmony.—Sometimes she swells a manly throat, and her song kindles into ardour: the tone is so *bold*, and strikes with such energy, that you would imagine the sprightly serenader in the very next thicket. Anon, the *strain languishes*, and the mournful minstrel melts into tenderness: the melancholy notes just steal upon the shades, and faintly touch your ear; or, in soft and sadly-pleasing accents, seem to die along the distant vale. Silence is all attention; and night listens to the trilling tale.

What an invitation is this, to slip away from the thronged city! This coy and modest minstrel, entertains only the *lovers of retirement*. Those, that are carousing over their bowls, or ranting at the riotous

club, lose this feast of harmony.—In like manner, the pleasures of religion; the joy of reconciliation with God; the satisfaction arising from the unbounded, ravishing prospect of a blissful immortality; these are all lost to the mind, that is ever *in the croud*; and dares not, or delights not, to *retire into itself*.—Are we charmed with the nightingale's song? Do we wish to have it nearer, and hear it oftener? O! let us seek a renewed heart, and a resigned will; a conscience that whispers peace, and passions that are tuned by grace: then, shall we never want a melody in our *own breasts*, far more musically *pleasing* than sweet *Philomela's* sweetest strains.

As different as the *voices* of these birds, are the *circumstances* of those few mortals, who continue awake.—Some are squandering pearls, shall I say, or kingdoms? No; but what is unspeakably more precious, time. Squandering this inestimable talent, with the most senseless and wanton prodigality. Not content with allowing a *few spare minutes*, for the purpose of necessary recreation; they lavish many hours, devote *whole nights*, to that idle diversion of *shuffling, ranging, and detaching*, a set of painted paste-boards.—Others, instead of this busy trifling, act the part of their own tormentors. They even piquet themselves *, and call it amusement; they are torn by wild horses, and yet term it a sport. What else is the *gamester's* practice, while his mind is held in the most *anxious suspense*, and agitated by the *fiercest extremes* of hope and fear? While the dice are rattling, his heart is throbbing; his fortune is tottering; and, possibly, at the very next throw, the one sinks in the gulph of ruin, the other is hurried into the rage of distraction.

Some, snatched from the bloom of health, and the lap of plenty, are confined to the *chamber of sickness*. Where they are constrained (O sad alternative!) either to plunge into the everlasting world, in an *unprepared condition*; or else, to think over all the

* In allusion to a very painful punishment, inflicted on delinquents among the soldiery.

fellies of a heedless life, and all the *bitterness* of approaching death. The disease rages; it baffles the force of medicine; and urges the reluctant wretch, to the brink of the precipice. While furies rouse the conscience, and point at the bottomless pit below.—Perhaps, his *drooping mother*, deprived long ago of the husband of her bosom, and bereft of all her other offspring; is, even now, receiving the blow which consummates her misfortunes *. In vain, she tries to assuage the sorrows of a beloved son: in vain, she attempts, with her tender offices, to prolong a life, dearer than her own. He faints in her arms; he bows his head; he drops in death. The last pang, which dislodges the unwilling soul, rends an *only child*, from the yearning embraces of a parent; and tears away the support of her age, from a disconsolate widow.

While *those* long for a reprieve; *others* invite the stroke. Quite weary of the world, with a restless impatience, they sigh for a dissolution. Some pining away under the *tedious decays* of an incurable *consumption*; or gasping for breath, and almost suffocated, amidst an *inundation of dropical waters*. On some a *relentless cancer* has fastened its envenomed teeth; and is gnawing them, though in the midst of bodily vigour, in

* This brings to my mind one of the deepest and most affecting mourning-pieces extant in writing. The sacred historian paints it in all the simplicity of stile; and yet in all the strength of colouring.—When Jesus came nigh to the gate of the city, behold! there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.—What a beautiful gradation is here! every fresh circumstance is an additional aggravation of the calamity: till, at length, the description is worked up into the most finished picture, of exquisite and inconceivable distress. He was a *young man*: cut off in the flower of life, amidst a thousand gay expectations, and smiling hopes. He was an *only son*; the afflicted mother's all: so that none remained to preserve the name, or perpetuate the family. And, what rendered the case still more deplorable, *she was a widow*: left entirely desolate, abandoned to her woes, without any to share her sorrows, or comfort her under her misfortunes.—Is not this a fine sketch of the picturesque? Who can consider the narrative, with any attention, and not feel his heart penetrated with a tender commiseration?

the midst of pitying friends, gradually to death. Others are on a rack of agonies, by *convulsive fits* of the stone. Oh! how the pain writhes her limbs; how the sweat bedews their flesh; and their eye-balls wildly roll! Methinks, the night condole with these her distressed children; and sheds *dewy tears* over their sorrowful abodes.—But, of all mortals, *they* are the most exquisitely miserable, who groan beneath the pressure, of a *melancholy mind*; or smart under the lashes, of a *resentful conscience*. Though robed in ermine; or covered with jewels; the state of a slave chained to the galleys, or of an exile condemned to the mines, is a perfect paradise compared with theirs.

O! that the *votaries* of *mirth*; whose life is a continued round of merriment and whim; would bestow one serious reflection on this *variety* of human *woes*! It might render them less enamoured with the few languid sweets that are thinly scattered through this vale of tears, and are environed with such a multitude of ragged thorns. It might teach them, no longer to dance away their years with a giddy *rambling impulse*; but to aspire, with a *determined aim*, after those happy regions, where delights abundant and unim-bittered flow.

Can there be circumstances, which a man of wisdom would more earnestly deprecate, than these several cases of grievous tribulation? There are; and what is very astonishing, they are frequently the desire and the choice of those, who fancy themselves the sole heirs of happiness: those, I mean, who are launching out into the *depths* of *extravagance*, and running excessive *lengths* of *riot*; who are prostituting their reputation, and sacrificing their peace, to their lusts: who are sapping the foundations of their health in debaucheries; and shipwrecking the interests of their families, in their bowls: and, what is worse are forfeiting the joys of an *eternal heaven*, for the *sordid* satisfactions of the beast; for the *transitory* sensations of an hour.—O ye slaves of appetite how far am I from envying your inordinate revels.

Ab

Ah! little are you sensible; that while voluptuousness showers her roses, and luxury diffuses her odours; they scatter *poisons* also, and shed unheeded *bane* *. Evils incomparably more malignant, than the worm-wood and gall of the sharpest affliction.—Since death is in the drunkard's cup; and worse than poniards in the harlot's embrace; may it ever be the privilege of the man whom I love, to go without his share of these *pestilent sweets* †!

ABUNDANCE of *living sparks* glitter in the lanes, and twinkle under the hedges. I suppose they are the *glow-worms*; which have lighted their little lamps, and obtained leave, through the absence of the sun, to play a feeble beam. A faint glimmer just serves to render them perceivable; without tending at all to dissipate the shades, or making any amends for the departed day.—Should a traveller, dropping with wet, and shivering with cold, hover round this *mimicry* of *fire*; in order to dry his garments, and warm his benumbed limbs: should some unfortunate rover, groping for his way in a black and dark night, take one of these *languid tapers*, as a light to his feet, and a lantern to his paths: how certainly would both the one and the other be frustrated of their expectation!—And are *they* more likely to succeed, who neglecting that sovereign balm, which distilled from the crosses; fly to any *carnal diversion*, to heal the anxiety of the mind? Who, deaf to the infallible decisions of revelation; resign themselves over to the erroneous *conjectures* of *reason*, in order to find the way that leadeth unto life! Or, lastly, who apply to the *froth* of this

* Yes; in the flow'rs that wreath the sparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiss, and pois'nous serpents roll.

Priest's Sol.

† *Quam saepe est suavitatibus istis carere!*—In this fine sentence quoted from *St Augustine*, there is much the same beautiful turn, and noble sentiment, as in those lines of *Mr Pope*,

Count all th' advantage prosp'rous vice attains,
'Tis but what virtue flies from, and disdains.

VOL. II.

Y

vain

vain world, for a satisfactory portion, and a substantial happiness? Their conduct is in no degree wiser; their disappointment equally sure; and their miscarriage infinitely more disastrous. To speak in the delicate language of a sacred writer, "They sow the wind, and will reap the whirlwind *."

To say the truth; the pleasures of the world, which we are *all* so prone to dote upon; and the powers of fallen reason, which *some* are so apt to idolize †; are not only vain, but treacherous. Not only a *painted flame*, like these sparkling animals; but much like those *unctuous exhalations*, which arise from the marshy ground, and often dance before the eyes of the benighted wayfaring man. Kindled into a sort of fire, they personate a guide, and seem to offer their service; but blazing with *delusive light*, mislead their follower into hidden pits, headlong precipices, and unfathomable gulfs; where far from his beloved friends, far from all hopes of succour, the unhappy wanderer is swallowed up, and lost.

Not long ago, we observed a very surprising ap-

* Hof. viii. 7.

† I hope it will be observed, that I am far from decrying that noble faculty of reason, when exerted in her proper sphere; and acting in a *deferential subordination* to the revealed will of Heaven. While she exercises her powers within these appointed limits, she is unspeakably serviceable, and cannot be too industriously cultivated. — But, when she sets up herself in *proud contradistinction* to the sacred oracles; when all-arrogant and self-sufficient, she says to the word of scripture, *I have no need of thee*; she is then, I must be bold to maintain, not only a glow-worm, but an *ignis fatuus*; not only a bubble but a snare.

May not this remark, with the strictest propriety; and without the least limitation; be applied to the *generality* of our modern romances, novels, and *too many* of our theatrical entertainments. These are commonly calculated, to inflame a wanton fancy; or, conducted with so much modesty, as not to debauch the affections; they pervert the judgment, and bewilder the taste. By their incredible adventures; their extravagant parade of gallantry; and their characters, widely different from truth and nature; they inspire foolish conceits; beget idle expectations; introduce a disgust of genuine history; and indispose their admirers, to acquiesce in the duties of civilities, or to relish the *sober* satisfactions of common life.

pearance

pearance in the western sky. A *prodigious star* took its flaming rout through those coasts; and trailed, as it passed, a tremendous length of fires, almost over half the heavens. Some, I imagine, viewed the portentous stranger with much the same anxious amazement, as *Belshazzar* beheld the handwriting upon the wall. Some looked upon it as a *bloody * flag*, hung out by divine resentment over a guilty world. Some read, in its glaring visage, the fate of nations, and the fall of kingdoms †. To others it shook, or seemed to shake, *pestilence* and *war* from its horrid hair.—For my part, I am not so superstitious, as to regard what every astrologer has to prognosticate upon the accession of a *comet*, or the awful projection of its huge vapoury train. Nothing can be more precarious and unjustifiable, than to draw such conclusions from such events: since they are neither *preternatural* effects, nor do they throw the frame of things into any *disorder*. I would rather adore that omnipotent Being, who rolled those stupendous orbs from his creating hand; and leads them, by his providential eye, through unmeasurable tracks of æther: who bids them now approach the sun, and glow with unsufferable ardors ‡; now retreat to the utmost bounds of our planetary system, and make their entry among other worlds.

THEY are harmless visitants. I acquit them from the charge of causing, or being necessary to desolating plagues. Would to God there were no other more formidable indications of *approaching judgments*, or

* ——— *Liquida si quando nocte cometa
Sanguine lugubrei rubent.*

Virg.

† ——— *Grinemque timendi
Sideris & terris mutantem regna cometem.*

Lucan.

‡ “ The comet in the year 1680, according to Sir *Isaac Newton*’s computation, was, in its nearest approach, above 166 times nearer the sun than the earth is. Consequently, its heat was then 28000 times greater than that of summer. So that a ball of iron as big as the earth, heated by it, would hardly become cool in 50000 years.” *Der. Astr. Theol.* p. 237.

impending ruin! But, alas! when vice becomes predominant, and irreligion almost epidemical: when the Sabbaths of a jealous God, are notoriously profaned; and that “name, which is great, wonderful, “and holy,” is prostituted to the meanest, or abused to the most execrable purposes: when the worship of the great Creator and Preserver of mankind is banished from many of the most *conspicuous families*; and it is deemed a piece of rude impertinence, so much as to mention the gracious Redeemer, in our *genteel interviews*: when it passes for an elegant freedom of behaviour, to ridicule the mysteries of Christianity; and a species of a refined conversation, to taint the air with lascivious hints; when those that sit in the *scarner’s chair*, sin with a high hand; and many of those that wear the *professor’s garb*, are destitute of the power, and content themselves with the mere form of godliness: when such is the state of a community, there is reason, too apparent reason, to be horribly afraid. Such *phenomena*, abounding in the *moral world*, are not fanciful, but real omens. Will not an injured God “be avenged on such a nation “as this?” Will he not be provoked, to “sweep “them with the besom of destruction*?”

O! that the inhabitants of *Great Britain*, would lay these alarming considerations to heart! The Lord of hosts has commanded the sword of *civil discord* to return into its sheath; but have we returned even one from his *evil ways*? Are we become a renewed people; devoted to a dying Saviour; and zealous of good works?——What mean those *peals of sobbings* which burst from the *expiring cattle*?——What mean those melancholy moans, where the lusty drove

* Is. xiv. 23. The eternal Sovereign, speaking of *Babylon*, denounces this threatening, *I will sweep it with the besom of destruction*.——What a noble, but dreadful image, is here! how strongly and awfully portrayed! how pregnant also in its signification! intimating at once the *vile nature*, the *total extirpation*, of this wicked people; and the *perfect ease*, with which the righteous God would execute his intended vengeance.

were wont to low *? What mean those arrows of untimely deaths, discharged on our innocent and useful animals? Are not these the weapons of divine displeasure, and manifest chastisements of a sinful generation †? Has not God, the "God to whom vengeance belongeth," still a controversy with our land? And who can tell where the visitation will end? What a storm may follow these prelusive drops? O! that we may "hear the rod, and who hath appointed "it!" Taught by these *penal effects* of our disobedience, may we remove the *accursed thing* ‡, from our tents; our practices; our hearts! May we turn from all ungodliness, before wrath come upon us to the uttermost; before iniquity prove our ruin!

SOMETIMES, at this hour, another most remarkable sight amuses the curious, and alarms the vulgar. A blaze of lambent meteors is kindled; or some very extraordinary *lights* are refracted, *in the quarters of the North*. Sometimes the radiant streamers meet and *mingle*, insomuch, that the air seems to be all conflicting fire: at other times, they *start* from one another; and like legions in precipitate flight, sweep each a separate way, through the firmament. Now, they are *quiescent*; anon, they are thrown into a quivering motion; presently, a nimble glance diffuses them over the whole hemisphere. Sometimes, with an aspect *awfully ludicrous*, they represent extravagant and antic vagaries; at other times, you would suspect, that some invisible power was playing off the *artillery*

* If these papers should be so fortunate, as to outlive their author, perhaps it may be needful to inform posterity, that the above-mentioned hints, allude to a most terrible, contagious, and mortal *temper*; raging, at the time of writing them, among the *horned cattle*, in various parts of the kingdom.

† Hinc letis vituli vulgo moriuntur in herbis,
Et dædæcæ animas plena ad præsepia reddunt.
Bulatu hinc pecorum, & crebris mugitibus amnes,
Arentesque sonant ripæ, colleſque ſupini.

Virg.

‡ Joſh. vi. 18.

of the *skies*, and giving us the flash without the noise.

The villagers gaze at the spectacle, first with wonder, then with horror. A general *panic* seizes the country. Every heart throbs, and every face is pale. The crowds that flock together, instead of diminishing, increase the dread. They catch contagion from each others looks and words: while fear is in every eye, and every tongue speaks the language of terror. Some see *hideous shapes*, armies mixing in fierce encounter, or fields swimming with blood. Some foresee *direful events*, states overthrown, or mighty monarchs tottering on their thrones. Others, scared with still more frightful apprehensions, think of nothing but the *day of doom*. "Sure," says one, "the unalterable hour is struck, and the end of all things come."—"See," replies another, "how the blasted stars look wan! Are not these the signs of the Son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven?"—"Jesus, prepare us" (cries a third, and lifts his eyes in devotion) "for the Archangel's trump, and the great tribunal!"

If this *waving brightness*, which plays innocently over our heads, be so amazing to multitudes; what inexpressible consternation must overwhelm unthinking mortals, when the *general conflagration* commences? The day, the dreadful day, is approaching. "In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise*, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;

* 2 Pet. iii. 10. I have often thought this verse an eminent instance of that kind of beautiful writing, in which the very *sound* bears a sort of *significancy*; at least, carries an exact correspondence with the sense. The original expression—*porzudav*—is one of the hoardest and deepest words in language. Nothing could be more exquisitely adapted to affect the ear, as well as impress the *imagination*, with the wreck of nature, and the crash of a falling world.—I scarce ever read this clause, but it brings to my mind that admired description in *Milton*.

— On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil, and jarring sound,
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder. —

Book II. l. 379.

"heat; the earth also, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." That mighty hand, which once opened the windows from on high, and broke up the fountains of the great deep, will then unlock all the *magazines of fire*, and pour a *second deluge* upon the whole earth. The vengeful flames, kindled by the breath of the Almighty, spread themselves from the centre to the circumference. Nothing can withstand their impetuosity; nothing can escape their rage. Universal desolation attends their progress. Magnificent palaces, and solemn temples, are laid in ashes. Spacious cities, and impregnable towers, are mingled in one smoking mass. Not only the productions of *human art*, but the works of *almighty power*, are fuel for the devouring element. The everlasting mountains melt, like the snows which cover their summit. Even vast oceans, serve only to augment the inconceivable rapidity and fury of the blaze. —O! how shall I, or others, stand undismayed amidst the glare of a *burning world*; unless the LORD JEHOVAH be our defence? How shall we be upheld in security, when the globe itself is sinking in a *fiery ruin*; unless the Rock of ages be our support?

BEHOLD! a new spectacle of wonder! The *moon* is making her entry into the sky. See her rising in *clouded majesty*: all grand and stately, but somewhat sullied in her aspect. However, she *brightens* as she *advances*; and grows clearer, as she climbs higher: till, at length, her silver loses all its dross; she unvails her peerless light; and becomes "the beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars*;" delighting every eye, and chearing the whole world, with the bright-

It is a pleasing employ, and one of the noblest offices of true criticism, to point out the inferior recommendations of the *sacred classics*. Though, I believe, the inspired writers themselves, amidst all the elevation and magnificence of their divine ideas, disdained a scrupulous attention to such *little niceties of style*.

* Eccl. xlii. 9.

— *Lucidum cali decus.*

Hor.

ness

ness of her appearance, and the softness of her splendours!—O! thou *queen* of the *shades*! may it be my ambition, to follow this thy instructive example! While others are fond to transcribe the *fashions* of *little courts*, and to mimic personages of inferior state; be it mine, to imitate *thy improving purity*! May my conduct become more unblemished, and my temper more refined; as I proceed, farther and farther, in my probationary course! May every sordid desire wear away, and every irregular appetite be gradually lost, as I make nearer approaches to the celestial mansions! Will not this be a comfortable evidence, that I too shall shine, in my adored Redeemer's kingdom? Shine with a *richer* lustre, than that which radiates from thy resplendent orb: shine, with an *unfading* lustre, when every ray, that beams from thy beauteous sphere, is totally extinguished.

THE day afforded us a variety of entertaining fights. These were all withdrawn at the approach of darkness. The stars, kindly officious, immediately lent us their aid. This served to *alleviate* the frown of night; not to *recover* the objects from their *obscurity*. A faint ray, scarcely reflected, and not from the entire surface of things, gave the straining eye a very imperfect glimpse; such as rather, mocked, than satisfied vision.—But now the moon is risen, and has collected all her beams, the veil is again taken off from the countenance of nature. We once again behold the world's great picture: not indeed in its late lively colours, but more *delicately shaded*, and arrayed in *sister charms* *.

What a *majestic scene* is here! How incomparably grand, and exquisitely fine!—The moon, like an immense crystal lamp, pendent in the magnificent cieling of the heavens. The stars, like so many thousands of golden tapers, fixed in their azure sockets:

* ————— Now reigns

Full-orb'd the moon, and with more pleasing light
Shadowy sets off the face of things.

Milton.

all

all pouring their lustre on spacious cities, and lofty mountains; glittering on the ocean; gleaming on the forest; and opening a prospect, wide as the eye can glance, more various than fancy can paint *.—We are forward to admire the performances of human art. A landskip, elegantly designed, and sketched out with a masterly hand; a piece of statuary, that seems, amidst all the recommendations of exact proportion, and graceful attitude, to soften into flesh, and almost breathe with life; these little *imitations* of nature, we behold with a pleasing surprise. And shall we be less affected, less delighted, with the inexpressibly noble, and completely finished *original*?—The ample dimensions of *Ranelagh's* dome; the gay illuminations of *Vaux-Hall* grove; I should scorn to mention on such an occasion, were they not the objects of general admiration. Shall we be charmed with those *puny essays*, of finite ingenuity; and touched with no transport, at this *stupendous display* of omnipotent skill? at the august grandeur, and shining stateliness, of the firmament? that forms an alcove for ten thousand worlds, and is ornamented with myriads of everlasting luminaries.—Surely, this must betray, not only a *total want* of religion; but the most abject littleness of mind, and the utmost *poverty* of genius.

* As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night;
O'er heav'n's clear azure spreads her sacred light;
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver ev'ry mountain's head;
Then shine the vales; the rocks in prospect rise;
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.

Iliad VIII.

I transcribe these lines, because Mr *Pope* says, they exhibit, in the original, the finest *night-piece* in poetry. And, if they are so beautiful in *Homer's* language, who can suspect their suffering any disadvantage from the pen of his admirable *translator*?

THE

THE moon, is not merely “an ornament in the high places of the LORD;” but of signal service to the inhabitants of the earth.—How uncomfortable is deep, pitchy, total darkness! especially, in the long absence of the winter’s sun. Welcome, therefore, thrice welcome, this auspicious gift of Providence, to enliven the nocturnal gloom, and line with silver the raven-coloured mantle of night.——How desirable to have our summer-evenings illuminated! that we may be able to tread the dewy meads, and breathe the delicious fragrancy of our gardens: especially, when the sultry heats render it irksome and fatiguing, to walk abroad by day.——How cheering to the *shepherd*, the use of this universal lantern; as he tends his fleecy charge, or late consigns them to their hurdled cots! How pleasing to the *mariner*, as he ploughs the midnight main; to adjust the tackling, and explore his way, under the influence of this beaming scone!——For these, and other beneficial purposes, the hand of the ALMIGHTY has hung the *stately branch* on high; and filled it with a splendor, not confined to a single edifice, or commensurate to a particular square, but diffusive as the whole extent of the hemisphere.

The most faithful of our inferior servants are sometimes tardy in their office; sometimes negligent of their duty: but this celestial attendant is most *exactly punctual*, at all the stated periods of her ministration. If we choose to prolong our journey, after the sun is gone down; the moon, during her whole *increase* is always ready to act in the capacity of a guide. If we are inclined to set out very early in the morning, the moon in her *decrease*, prevents the dawn, in order to offer her assistance. And, because it is so pleasant a thing, for the eyes to behold the light, the moon, at her *full*, by a course of unintermitted waiting never fails to give us, as it were, a double day.——How apparently has the divine Wisdom interested itself, in providing even for the *pleasurable accommodation* of man! How desirous, that he should want no piece of commodious furniture; no kind of light

lightful convenience! And, in prosecution of these benevolent intentions, has annexed so valuable an appendage to the terrestrial globe.—Justly, therefore, does the Psalmist celebrate that admirable constitution, which ordained *the moon and the stars to govern the night*, as an instance of rich goodness; *of mercy which endureth for ever* *.

THE moon, it is confessed, is *no luminous body*. All the brightness, which beautifies her countenance, is originally in the sun, and no more than transmissively in her. That glorious orb is the parent of day, and the palace of light. From thence, the morning-star gilds her horn †; from thence, the planetary circles are crowned with lustre; and from thence, the moon derives all her silver radiance.—It is pleasing to reflect, that such is the case with the *all-sufficient Redeemer*, and his *dependent people*. We are replenished from his fulness. What do we possess, which we have not received; and what can we desire, which we may not expect; from that never-failing source of all good? He is the author of our faith, and the former of our graces. In his unspotted life, we see the path; in his meritorious death, the price; and in his triumphant resurrection, the proof of bliss and immortality. If we offend and fall seven times a-day; he is the LORD our *peace* ‡. If we are depraved, and our best deeds, very unworthy; he is the LORD our *righteousness* §. If we are blind, and even brutish, in heavenly knowledge; he is the LORD our *wisdom* §: his word dispels the shades; his Spirit scatters the intellectual gloom; his eye looks our darkness into

* Psal. cxxxvi. 9.

† I might, to justify this expression, observe, that the planet *Venus*, commonly called the morning-star, is found, by our telescopes, frequently to appear *horned*; or to have a *crescent* of light, somewhat like the moon, a little before, or after her conjunction. But this would be a remark, too deep and refined for my scheme; which proceeds only upon a *superficial* knowledge, and the most *obvious* appearances of nature.

‡ Judg. vi. 24.

§ Jer. xxiii. 6.

§ 1 Cor. i. 30.
day.

day. In short, we are nothing, and "CHRIST is all." Worse than *defective* in ourselves, "we are *complete* in "him." So that if we shine, it is with delegated rays, and borrowed light. We act by a strength, and glory in merits not our own.—O! may we be thoroughly sensible of our dependence on the Saviour! may we constantly imbibe his propitious beams; and never, by *indulging unbelief*, or *backsliding into folly*, withdraw our souls from his benign influences! Lest we lose our comfort, and our holiness; as the fair ruler of the night loses her splendor, when her urn is turned from its fountain*, and receives no more communications of solar effulgence.

THE moon is incessantly *varying*, either in her aspect, or her stages.—Sometimes her face is all lustre. Anon a radiant crescent adorns her brow. Soon it dwindles into a slender streak. Till, at length, all her beauty vanishes, and she becomes a beamless orb.—Sometimes she rises with the *descending day*; and begins her procession amidst admiring multitudes. Ere long she defers her progress till the *midnight-watches*; and steals, unobserved, upon the sleeping world.—Sometimes she just appears, on the *edges* of the western *horizon*; and drops us a ceremonious visit. Within a while she sets out on her nightly tower, from the opposite regions of the east; *traverses* the whole *hemisphere*; and never offers to withdraw, till the more refulgent partner of her sway renders her presence unnecessary.—In a word, she is, while conversant among us, still waxing or waning, and "never continueth in one stay."

SUCH is the moon; and such are all *sublunary things*; exposed to perpetual vicissitudes. How often, and how soon, have the faint *echoes* of *renown* slept in

* Alluding to those truly poetical lines in *Milton*,

Hither as to their fountain, other stars

Repairing, in their golden urns draw light.

Par. Lost, B. VII. l. 364

silence;

silence; or been converted into the clamours of obloquy! The same lips, almost with the same breath, cry, Hosanna, and Crucify. — Have not *riches* confessed their notorious uncertainty, a thousand and a thousand times? Either melting away, like snow in our hands, by insensible degrees; or escaping, like a winged prisoner from its cage, with a precipitate flight. — Have we not known the *bridegroom's closet*, an *anti-chamber* to the *tomb*; and heard the voice, that so lately pronounced the sparkling pair husband and wife, proclaim an everlasting divorce; and seal the decree with that solemn asseveration; “Ashes to ashes, dust to dust?” — Our *friends*, though the medicine of life; our *health*, though the balm of nature; are a most precarious possession. How soon may the one become a corpse in our arms; and how easily is the other destroyed in its vigour! — You have seen, no doubt, a set of pretty *painted birds*, perching on your trees, or sporting in your meadows. You was pleased with the lovely visitants, that brought beauty on their wings, and melody in their throats. But could you *ensure* the *continuance* of this agreeable entertainment? No, truly: at the least disturbing stoise, at the least terrifying appearance, they start from their seats; they mount the skies; and are gone in an instant, gone for ever. Would you choose to have a happiness, which bears date with their arrival, and expires at their departure? If you would not be content with a portion, that is settled only for such a *fortuitous term*, not of years, but of moments, O! take up with nothing earthly; set your affections on things above; there alone is “no variableness, or shadow of turning.”

JOB is not a more illustrious pattern of patience, than an eminent exemplification of this remark. — View him in his *private estate*, he heaps up silver as the dust; he washes his steps in butter; and the rock pours him out rivers of oil. — View him in his *public character*, princes revere his dignity; the aged listen to his wisdom; every eye beholds him with delight;

light; every tongue loads him with blessings.—View him in his *domestic circumstances*; on one hand, he is defended by a troop of sons; on the other, adorned with a train of daughters; and on all sides, surrounded by “a very great household.”—Never was human felicity so consummate; never was *disastrous revolution* so sudden. The lightning, which consumed his cattle, was not more terrible, and scarce more instantaneous. The joyful parent is bereft of his offspring, and his “children are buried in death.” The man of affluence is stript of his abundance; and he that was clothed in scarlet, embraces the dunghill. The venerable patriarch is the derision of scoundrels; and the late darling of an indulgent providence, is become “a brother to dragons, a companion of owls.”—Nor need we go back to former ages, for proofs of this afflicting truth. In our times; in all times; the wheel continues the same incessant whirl: and frequently those, who are *triumphing* to-day, in the highest *elevations* of joy, to-morrow are *bemoaning* the instability of mortal affairs, in the very *depths* of misery *.——Amidst so much fluctuation and uncertainty, how wretched is the condition, which has no anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast? May thy lo-

* I believe, I may venture to apply, what the *Temanite* says of the affairs of the wicked, to all *sublunary things*; as a true description of their very great instability. Job xxii. 16. נִחַר וְעָקַם סִוְרָם rendered by *Schultens*, *Flamen fustum fundamentum eorum*. Their foundation (or what they reckon their most solid and stable possession) is a flood poured out.——Which is one of the *boldest images*, and most *poetical beauties*, I ever met with in any language, sacred or prophane. In order to have a tolerable conception of the image, and a taste of its beauty; you must suppose a *torrent* of waters rushing in broken cataracts, and with impetuous rapidity, from a steep and craggy mountain. Then, imagine to yourself an *edifice*, built upon the edge of this rolling precipice; that has no other *basis* than one of those *whirling waves*, which constitute such a headlong stream.——Was there ever such a representation of transitory prosperity, tending, with inconceivable swiftness, unto ruin? Yet such is every form of human felicity, that is not grounded upon *Jesus*, and a participation of his merits, who is the *Rock of ages*; on *Jesus* and his image, formed in our hearts, which is the *hope of glory*.

ving-kindness, O God, be our present treasure; and thy future glory our reversionary inheritance! Then shall our happiness not be like the full-orbed moon, which is "a light that *decreaseth* in its perfection;" but like the sun, when he goeth forth in his strength, and knoweth no other change, but that 'of *shining* more and more unto the perfect day.

METHINKS, in this ever-varying sphere, I see a representation, not only of our temporal advantages, but also of our *spiritual accomplishments*. Such, I am sure, is what the kind partiality of a friend would call my *righteousness*: and such, I am apt to suspect*, is the righteoulsness of every man living. Now we exercise it, in some few instances; in some little degrees. Anon, sin revives, and leads our souls into a transient, though unwilling captivity. Now we are *meek*; but soon a ruffling accident intervenes, and turns our composure into a fretful disquietude. Now we are *humble*; soon we reflect upon some inconsiderable, or imaginary superiority over others, and a sudden elatement swells our minds. Now, perhaps, we possess a

* I would not be understood, as measuring in this respect, others by *myself*; but as taking my estimate from the unerring standard of scripture. And, indeed, proceeding on this evidence, supported by this authority, I might have ventured farther than a bare *suspicion*. For, "there is not a *just* man upon earth, that doth good, and *sinneth not*;" says the Spirit of inspiration by Solomon, (Ecc. vii. 20.)—Nay, such is the purity, and so extensive are the demands of the divine law, that an apostle makes a still more humbling acknowledgment, "In *many* things we offend *all*." (Jam. iii. 2.)—And the *all-wise* teacher, who most thoroughly knew our frame, directs the most advanced, most established, and most watchful Christians, to pray daily for the forgiveness of their *daily trespasses*.—To which testimonies, I beg leave to add, an elegant passage from the *Canticles*; because it not only expresses the sentiment of this paragraph, but illustrates it, by the very same similitude. She (the church) is *fair as the moon, clear as the sun*. Fair as the moon, the lesser and changeable light, in her *sanctification*: clear as the sun, the greater and invariable luminary, in her *justification*. The inherent holiness of believers being imperfect, and subject to many inequalities; while their imputed obedience is every way complete, and constantly like itself. Cant. vi. 10.

clean heart, and are warm with *holy love* : but, Oh how easily is the purity of our affections sullied ; how soon the fervour of our gratitude cooled ! And is there not something amiss, even in our best moments ? Something to be *ashamed* of, in all we *are* ; something to be *repented* of, in all we *do* ?

With what gladness, therefore, and adoring gratitude, should we “ submit to the righteousness of our “ incarnate *GOD* ;” and *receive*, as a divine gift, what cannot be *acquired* by human *works* * !—A writer of the first distinction, and nicest discernment, stiles the obedience of our glorious Surety, an *everlasting righteousness* †. Such as was subject to no interruption, nor obscured by the least blemish ; but proceeded always in the same uniform tenor, of the most spotless perfection.—This righteousness, in another sense, answers the prophet’s noble description ; as its beneficial and sovereign efficacy knows no end ; but lasts through all our life ; lasts in the trying hour of death ; lasts at the decisive day of judgment ; lasts through every generation ; and will last to all eternity.

SOMETIMES I have seen that resplendent globe *strip* of her *radiance* ; or, according to the emphatical language of scripture, “ turned into blood.” The earth, interposing with its opaque body, intercepted the solar rays, and cast its own gloomy shadow on the moon. The malignant influence gained upon her sickening orb ; extinguished, more and more, the remainders of light ; till, at length, like one in a deep *swoon*, no comeliness was left in her countenance ; she was totally *overspread* with *darkness*.—At this juncture, what a multitude of eyes were gazing upon the rueful spectacle ! Even of those eyes, which disregarded the empress of the night ; or beheld her with indifference ; when, robed in glory, and riding in her triumphal chariot, she shed a softer day through the

Rom. v. 17.—x. 3.

† Dan. ix. 24.

nations. But now, under these circumstances of disgrace, they watch her motions with the most *prying attention*; in every place, her misfortune is the object of general observation; and the prevailing topic of discourse in every company.

Is it not thus, with regard to *persons of eminence*, in their respective spheres! Kings, at the head of their subjects; nobles, surrounded with their dependents; and (after names of so much grandeur, may I be allowed to add) ministers, in their parishes*; are each in a conspicuous station. Their behaviour, in its *minutest* step, especially in any *miscarriage*, will be narrowly surveyed, and critically scanned. Can there be a louder call, to ponder the paths of their feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their ways?—Those, that move in inferior life, may grossly offend; and little alarm be given; perhaps no notice taken. But it is not to be expected, that the least slip in their conduct, the least flaw in their character, will pass undiscovered. *Malice*, with her *eagle-eyes*, will be sure to discern them; while *censure*, with her *shrill trumpet*, will be as far from concealing them; as *calumny*, with her *treacherous whispers*, from extenuating them. A planet may sink below the horizon; or a star, for several months, withdraw its shining; and scarce one in ten thousand perceive the loss. But, if the moon suffers a transient eclipse, almost half the world are spectators of her dishonour.

Very different was the case, when, at this late hour, I have taken a solitary walk on the *Western cliffs*. At the foot of the steep mountain, the sea, all clear and smooth, spread itself into an immense plain, and held a watery mirror to the skies. Infinite heights above, the firmament stretched its azure expanse; bespangled with unnumbered stars, and adorned with the moon, "walking in brightness†." She seemed to contemplate herself, with a peculiar pleasure; while the

* Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill, cannot be hid, Matth. v. 14.

† Job xxxi. 26.

transparent surface, both received, and returned, her *silver image*. Here, instead of being covered with sackcloth, she shone with double lustre; or rather, with a lustre multiplied, in proportion to the number of beholders, and their various situations.

Such, methinks, is the effect of an exemplary behaviour, in persons of exalted rank. Their course, as it is nobly *distinguished*, so it will be happily *influential*. Others will catch the diffusive ray; and be ambitious to resemble a pattern so attracting, so commanding. Their amiable qualities will not *terminate* in themselves; but we shall see them *reflected* from their families, their acquaintance, their retainers. Just as we may now behold another moon; trembling in the stream; glittering in the canal; and displaying its lovely impress, on every collection of waters.

THE moon, philosophy says, is a sort of *sovereign* over the *great deep*. Her orb, like a royal sceptre, sways the ocean, and actuates the fluid realms. It swells the tides, and perpetuates the reciprocal return of ebb and flow. By which means, the liquid element purges of its filth; and is preserved from being putrid itself, and from poisoning the world.—Is the moon thus *operative* on the vast abyss? And shall not the *faith* of eternal and infinite delights to come be equally efficacious on this soul of mine?—Far above her argent fields are treasures of *happiness*, unseen by mortal eye; by mortal ear unheard; and unconceived by any human imagination. In that desirable world, the most distinguished *honours* also are conferred; in comparison with which, the thrones and diadems of earthly monarchs, are empty pageants and childish toys. Yonder arch of sapphire, with its spangles of gold, is but the floor of those divine *bôdes*. What then are the apartments; what is the palace? how bright with glories; how rich with bliss?

O! ye mansions of blessedness; ye beauties of my Father's kingdom; that far outshine these lamps

the visible heaven; transmit your sweet and winning invitations to my heart. *Attract*, and *refine*, all my affections. With-hold them from *stagnating*, on the sordid shores of flesh; never suffer them to settle upon the lees of sense; but impress them with *emotions* of restless *desire*, after sublime and celestial joys.—Joys, that will proceed on in one everlasting flow, when seas shall cease to roll:—joys, that will charm every faculty with unimaginable pleasure; when the moon, with her waxing splendors, shall cheer our sight no more.

ENOUGH for the present evening. My thoughts have been sufficiently exercised, and my steps begin to be attended with weariness. Let me obey the admonition of nature; and give respite to my meditations, slumber to my eyes.—But stay.—Shall I retire to the bed of sleep, with as little ceremony; and with as much inattention, as the brutes to their sordid lair? Are no *acknowledgments* due to that divine Being, who has been the support of my life, and the length of my days? Have I no farther need of his *protecting* care; no more occasion for the blessings of his goodness?—*Lepidus*, perhaps, may laugh at the bended knee; and have a thousand darts of raillery, ready to be discharged on the practice of devotion. The wits, I know, are unmercifully severe on what *they* call, the drudgery of prayer, and the fantastical rant of praise. These they live to the illiterate labourer, and mean mechanic; or treat them, with a contemptuous sneer, as the parson's ignoble trade.

Is it then an instance of *superstitious* blindness, to distinguish; or, of *whimsical* zeal, to celebrate; the most supereminent merit? Is it an *ungraceful* business; or does it argue a *grovelling* disposition; to magnify goodness, transcendently rich and diffusive? Is it only for the *inferior herd*, to admire the most consummate excellence; only for *pusillanimous* creatures; to maintain an affiance on Almighty power?—What can be so truly becoming a *dependent state*, as to pay
our

our adoring homage, to the Fountain of perfection; and profess our devoted allegiance, to the supreme Governor of the universe? Can any thing more significantly bespeak an *ingenuous temper*; or administer a more real satisfaction to its finest feelings; than the exercises of penitential piety? by which we give vent to an honest anguish: or melt into filial sorrow; for our insensibility to the best of friends, for our disobedience to the best of parents?—In a word; can there be a more *sublime pleasure*, than to dwell, in fixed contemplation, on the beauties of the eternal Mind; the amiable Author of all that is fair, grand, and harmonious; the beneficent Giver of all that is convenient, comfortable, and useful? Can there be a more *advantageous employ*, than to present our requests to the Father of mercies; opening our minds to the irradiations of his wisdom, and all the faculties of our souls to the communications of his grace?—It is strange, unaccountably strange, that the notion of *dignity* in sentiment, and the pursuit of *refined* enjoyment, should ever be disunited from *devotion*. That persons, who make pretensions to an improved taste, and exalted genius, should neglect this most ennobling intercourse, with the wisest and best of Beings; the inexhaustible spring of honour and joy.

Shall I be deterred, from approaching this source of the purest delight? Deterred, from pursuing this highest improvement of my nature? Deterred from all, by a *formidable banter*; or confuted by one *irrefragable* smile?—No; let the moon, in her resplendent sphere; and yonder pole, with all its starry train; witness, if I be silent even or morn. If I refrain to kindle in my heart, and breathe from my lips, the reasonable incense of praise. Praise to that great and glorious God, who formed the earth, and built the skies; who poured from his hand the watery world, and breathed the all-surrounding air abroad. —“Thou also made the night, Maker omnipotent! —“and thou, the day! which I, though less than the —least of all thy mercies, have passed in safety, tranquility,

"quillity, and comfort.—When I was lost in the
"extravagance of dreams, or lay immersed in the in-
"sensibility of sleep; thy hand recovered me from
"the temporary lethargy, and strung my *limbs* with
"recruited vigour: thy hand set a new, a delicately
"fine edge, on all my blunted *senses*: and awakened
"my *thoughts*, when benumbed, into alacrity; re-
"duced them, when disconcerted, into order: resit-
"ting me, at once, to discharge the duties of my
"station; to relish the innocent entertainments of an
"animal, and to enjoy the sublime gratifications of a
"rational capacity.—When darkness covered the
"face of the creation, at thy command the *sun* arose,
"and darted its beams; painted the flowers, and di-
"stinguished every object: gave light to my *feet*, gave
"direction to my *hands*, and gave nature, with all
"her beautiful scenes, to my *eye*.—To thee, O
"thou GOD of my life, I owe the *continuance* of my
"being, and the *vivacity* of my constitution. By
"thy sacred order, without any consciousness of
"mine, the wheels of nature move within me, and
"the vital fountain plays. *Impelled* by thy power, the
"crimson current flows through innumerable chan-
"nels; and never once misses its way; never once is
"interrupted in its course: when a small obstruction
"might be disease; or the bursting of a single artery,
"death. *Over-ruled* by thy exquisite skill, it trans-
"forms itself, by the nicest operations of an inexpli-
"cable kind of chemistry, into a variety of the finest
"secretions: which glide into the muscles, and swell
"them for action; or pour themselves into the fluids,
"and repair their incessant decays; which cause
"cheerfulness to sparkle in the eye, and health to
"bloom in the cheek.

"*Disastrous accidents*, injurious to the peace of my
"mind; or fatal to the welfare of my body; beset
"my paths, in formidable ambush. But thy faith-
"fulness and truth, like an impenetrable shield, co-
"vered my head, and guarded me all around. Un-
"der this divine protection, I walked secure, amidst
"legions

"legions of *apparent* perils; and passed unhurt
 "through an unknown multiplicity of *unseen* evils.
 "Not one of my bones was broken; nor a single shaft
 "grazed upon my ease; even when the eye that
 "watched over me, saw, in its wide survey, *thousands*
 "falling beside me in irrecoverable ruin; and *ten thou-*
 "sands deeply wounded by the arrows that flew on
 "my right hand.—If *sickness* has, at any time, visit-
 "ed my chamber, or *pain* harrowed my flesh; it
 "was a *wholesome* discipline, and a *gracious* severity.
 "The chastisement proved a sovereign medicine, to
 "cure me of an immoderate fondness for this im-
 "perfect troublesome state; and to quicken my de-
 "sires after the unimbittered enjoyments of eternity.
 "—Has not thy munificence, unwearied and un-
 "bounded, spread my *table*; and furnished it with
 "the finest wheat, replenished it with *marrow* and
 "*fatness*? While temperance sweetened the bowl;
 "appetite seasoned the dish; contentment and grati-
 "tude crowned the repast.—Has not thy kindness, O
 "God of the families of *Israel*, preserved my affec-
 "tionate *relations*; who study, by their tender offi-
 "ces, to soften every care, and heighten every joy?
 "and given me valuable *friends*, whose presence is a
 "cordial, to cheer me in a dejected hour; and whose
 "conversation mingles improvement with delight?
 "When *sin* lay lurking amidst flowery scenes of
 "pleasure; enlightened by thy wisdom, I discerned
 "the latent mischief; made resolute by thy grace, I
 "spurned the luscious bane. If, through the impulse
 "of sensuality, or the violence of passion, I have
 "been hurried into the snare, and stung by the ser-
 "pent; thy faithful admonitions have recalled the
 "foolish wanderer; while the blood of thy Son has
 "healed his deadly wounds. Some, perhaps, have
 "been cut off in the midst of their iniquities; and, to
 "their inexpressible astonishment, transmitted from
 "the thrillings of polluted joy, to the agonies of eter-
 "nal despair: whereas, I have been distinguished by
 "long-suffering mercy; and instead of lifting up my
 "eyes

" eyes in torments, to behold a heaven irrecoverably
 " lost; I may lift them up under the pleasing views
 " of being admitted, ere long, into those abodes of
 " unutterable felicity.—In the mean time thou hast
 " vouchsafed me the *revelation* of thy will; the in-
 " fluences of thy *Spirit*; and abundance of the
 " most effectual *aids*, for advancing in knowledge,
 " and growing in godliness; for becoming more con-
 " formable to thy image, and more meet for thy
 " presence: for tasting the sacred pleasures of reli-
 " gion, and securing the unsearchable riches of
 " heaven.

" How various is thy beneficence, O thou lover of
 " souls! It has unsealed a thousand sources of good;
 " opened a thousand avenues of delight, and heaped
 " blessings upon me, with a ceaseless liberality. If
 " I should attempt to declare them, they would be
 " more than the *stars*, which glitter in this unclouded
 " sky; more than the *dewy* gems, which will adorn
 " the face of the morning.

" AND shall I *forget* the GOD of my salvation, the
 " author of all my mercies? Rather let my pulse for-
 " get to beat! Shall I render him *no expressions* of
 " thankfulness? Then might all nature reproach
 " my ingratitude.—Shall I rest satisfied with the *bare*
 " *acknowledgment* of my lips? No: let my *life* be
 " *vocal*, and speak his praise, in that only genuine,
 " that most emphatical language—the language of
 " devout obedience. Let the *bill* be drawn upon my
 " very heart; let all my affections *acknowledge* the
 " draught; and let the whole tenor of my actions,
 " in time, and through eternity, be continually *pay-*
 " *ing* the debt—the mighty debt of duty, veneration,
 " and love.

" And can I, O thou guide of my goings, and
 " guardian of all my interests—can I *distrust* such
 " signal, such experienced goodness? *Thou hast been*
 " *my helper*, through all the busy scenes of day: *there-*
 " *fore,*

“ *fore, under the shadow of thy wings* will I repose
“ myself, during the darkness, the danger, and
“ death-like inactivity of the night. Whatever
“ defilement I have contracted, wash it thoroughly
“ away in redeeming blood ; and let neither the sinful
“ stain, nor the sinful inclination, accompany me to
“ my couch ! ——— Then shall *I lay me down in peace,*
“ *and take my rest ;* cheerfully referring it to thy all-
“ wise determination, whether I shall open my eyes
“ in *this* world, or awake in the unknown regions of
“ *another.*”

The E N D.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

*There dwells a noble pathos in the skies,
Which warms our passions, proselytes our hearts :
How eloquently shines the glowing pole !
With what authority it gives its charge,
Remonstrating great truths in stile sublime !*
Night-Thoughts, No IX.

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N. B. It may seem unaccountable to an unlearned reader, that astronomers should speak such amazing things; and speak them with such an air of assurance; concerning the distances and magnitudes, the motions and relations of the heavenly bodies. But the exactness, with which ECLIPSES are calculated; the instant of their beginning, and the time of their continuance, assigned; assigned, almost to the nicety of a moment, and what is still more surprising, for the space of hundreds or thousands of years to come:—As this is a matter of fact, absolutely indisputable; it is also a very obvious, yet solid demonstration, that the principles of science, on which those calculations proceed, are not mere conjecture, or precarious supposition only; but have a real, a certain foundation, in the nature and constitution of things.

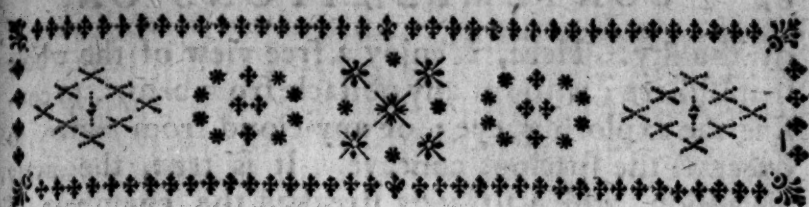
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CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

THIS evening, I exchange the nice retreats of art, for the noble theatre of nature. Instead of *measuring* my steps, under the *covert* of an arbour; let me range along the *summit*, of this gently rising hill.—There is no need of the leafy shade, since the sun has quitted the horizon, and withdrawn his scorching beams. But see, how advantages and inconveniencies are usually linked, and chequer our affairs below! If the *annoying heat* ceases, the *landskip*, and its pleasing scenes, are also removed.—The majestic castle, and the lowly cottage, are vanished together. I have lost the aspiring mountain, and its russet brow; I look round, but to no purpose, for the humble vale, and its flowery lap. The plains, whitened with flocks, and the heath, yellow with furze, disappear. The advancing night, has wrapt in darkness the long-extended forest; and drawn her mantle over the windings of the silver stream. I no longer behold that luxuriant fertility in the fields; that wild magnificence of prospect, and endless variety of images; which have so often *touched* me with *delight*, and *struck* me with *awe*, from this commanding eminence,

The loss, however, is scarcely to be regretted; since it is amply compensated by the opening beauties

of the sky. Here, I enjoy a free view of the whole hemisphere ; without any obstacle from below, to confine the exploring eye ; or any cloud from above, to overcast the spacious concave. It is true, the lively vermilion, which so lately streaked the chambers of the west, is all faded : but the *planets*, one after another, light up their lamps ; the *stars* advance in their glittering train ; a thousand and a thousand luminaries, shine forth in successive splendors ; and the whole firmament is kindling into the most beautiful glow. The *blueness* of the *ather*, heightened by the season of the year, and still more enlivened by the *absence* of the *moon*, gives those gems of heaven the strongest lustre.

One pleasure more the invading gloom has not been able to snatch from my sense, The night rather improves than destroys the fragrance which exhales from the *blooming beans*. With these, the sides of this sloping declivity are lined ; and with these, the balmy zephyrs perfume their wings. Does *Arabia*, from all her spicy groves, breathe a more liberal, or a more charming gale of sweets ? And what is a peculiar recommendation of the rural entertainments, presented in our happy land, they are alloyed by no apprehensions of danger. No poisonous serpent lurks under the blossom ; nor any ravenous beast lies, ready to start from the thicket. — But, I wander from a far more exalted subject. My thoughts, like my affections, are too easily diverted from the heavens, and detained by inferior objects. Away, my attention from these little *blandishments* of the *earth* ; since all the *glories* of the *sky* invite thy regard.

We have taken a turn among the *Tombs*, and viewed the solemn memorials of the dead ; in order to learn the vanity of mortal things, and to break their soft enchantment. We have surveyed the *ornaments* of the *Garden* ; not that the heart might be planted in the parterre, or take root among the flowery race ; but that these delicacies of a day might teach us

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aspire after a better paradise; where beauty never fades, and delight is ever in the bloom.—A third time we lighted the candle of meditation; and sought for wisdom, not in the crowded city, or wrangling schools, but in the silent and lonely *walks* of ancient *Night**.—Let us once more indulge the contemplative vein, and raise our speculations to those *sublimar works* of the great Creator; which the regions of the sky contain, and this dusky hour unveils †.

If we have discerned the touches of his pencil, glowing in the colours of spring; if we have seen a sample of his beneficence, exhibited in the stores of nature; and a ray of his brightness beaming in the blaze of day: O! what an infinitely richer field for the *display* of his *perfections*, are the heavens! The heavens, in the most emphatical manner, declare the glory of God. The heavens are nobly eloquent of the Deity, and the most magnificent heralds of their Maker's praise. They speak to the whole universe; for there is neither *speech* so *barbarous*, but their language is understood; nor *nation* so *distant*, but their voices are heard among them ‡.—Let me then, when multitudes are buried in sleep, listen to their silent lectures. Perhaps I may receive such impressive manifestations of "the eternal power and Godhead," as may *shed religion* on my soul, while I walk the solitary shades; and may be a tutelary *friend* to my *virtue*, when the call of business, and the return of light, expose me again to the inroads of temptation.

The *Israelites*, incited by frenzy, rather than devotion, worshipped the host of heaven. And the pretenders to *judicial astrology* talk of, I know not what, mysterious efficacy; in the different aspect of the stars, or the various conjunction and opposition.

* Alluding to the several subjects of the three preceding essays.

† Night opens the *noblest scenes*, and sheds an awe,
Which gives those venerable scenes full weight,
And deep reception in the tender'd heart.

Night-Thoughts, No IX.

‡ Psal. xix. 3.

of the planets.—Let those who are unacquainted with the sure word of revelation, give ear to these sons of delusion, and dealers in deceit: for my part, it is a question of indifference to me, whether the constellations shone with smiles, or frowned in frowns, on the hour of my nativity. Let CHRIST be my guard; and, secure in such protection, I would laugh at their impotent menaces. Let CHRIST be my guide; and I shall scorn to ask, as well as despair of receiving any predictive information from such lifeless masses.—What! shall “the living seek to the dead*?” Can these bodies advertise me of *future events*, which are unconscious of their *own existence*? Shall I have recourse to unintelligent stupid matter, when I may apply to that all-wise Being, who, with one comprehensive glance, distinctly views whatever is lodged in the bosom of immensity, or forming in the womb of futurity?—Never will I search for any intimations of my *fate*; but often trace my *Creator's footsteps* † in yonder starry plains. In the former case, they would be teachers of lies; in the latter, they are oracles of truth. In this therefore, this sense only, I profess myself the pupil of the stars.

* If. viii. 19.

† “It is most becoming (says a great author) such imperfect creatures as we are, to contemplate the works of GOD, with the design, that we may discern the manifestations of wisdom in them; and thereby excite in ourselves, those devout affections, and that superlative respect, which is the very essence of praise as it is a reasonable and moral service.”—*Abernethy on the Attributes*.—And, indeed, if we are sincerely disposed to employ ourselves in this excellent, this delightful duty of praising the infinite Creator; the *means* and the *motives*, are both at hand. His works, in a wonderful and instructive variety, present themselves with *pregnant* manifestations of the most *transcendent* excellencies of their Maker. They pour their evidences from all quarters, and in to all the avenues of the mind. They invite us, especially in the magnificent system of the universe, to contemplate—*counsel*, consummately wise; and *execution* inimitably perfect:—*power*, which nothing is impossible; and *goodness*, which extendeth to all which endureth for ever.—To give, not a full display, but only some *slight sketches*, of these glorious truths, is the principal scope of the following remarks.

THE vulgar are apprehensive of nothing more, than a multitude of *bright spangles*, dropt over the æthereal blue. They have no higher notion of these fine appearances, than that they are so many *golden studs*, with which the empyrian arch is decorated.— But studious minds, that carry a more accurate and strict inquiry among the celestial bodies, bring back advices of a most astonishing import. Let me just recollect the most material of those *stupendous discoveries*; in order to furnish out proper subjects for our contemplation. And let the unlearned remember, That the scene I am going to display, is the workmanship of that incomprehensible God, who is “perfect in knowledge, and mighty in power:” whose name, whose nature, and all whose operations, are “great and marvellous:” who summons into being, with equal ease, a single grain, or ten thousand worlds.—To this if we continually advert, the assertions, though they will certainly excite our *admiration*, need not transcend our *belief*.

THE earth is, in fact, a *round* body; however it may seem, in some parts, to be sunk into *vales*, and raised in *hills**; in other parts, to be spread into a spacious *plain*, extending to the confines of the heavens, or terminated by the waters of the ocean.—We may fancy, that it has deep *foundations*, and rests upon some prodigiously solid basis: but it is *pendent*, in the wide transpicious æther;

* A learned writer, I think, Dr *Derham*, has somewhere an observation to this purpose—That the loftiest *summits* of hills, and the most enormous *ridges* of mountains, are no real objection to the *globular* form of the earth. Because, however they may render it, to our limited sight, vastly uneven and protuberant; yet, they bear no more proportion to the *entire surface* of the terraqueous ball, than a *particle of dust*, casually dropt on the mathematician’s globe, bears to its whole circumference. Consequently, the rotund figure is no more destroyed in the one case, than in the other.—On the same principle, I have not thought it necessary, to take any notice of the comparatively small difference, between the *polar* and *equatorial* diameter of the earth.

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without any visible cause, to uphold it from above, or support it from beneath.—It may seem to be *sedentary* in its attitude, and *motionless* in its situation: but it is continually *failing* *, through the depths of the sky; and, in the space of twelve months, finishes the mighty voyage. Which periodical rotation produces the seasons, and completes the year.—As it proceeds in the annual circuit, it *spins* upon its own *centre*; and turns its sides alternately to the fountain of light. By which means, the *day* dawns in one hemisphere; while the *night* succeeds in the other. Without this expedient, one part of its regions would, during half the great revolution, be scorched with excessive heat, or languish under an unintermitted glare: while the other, exposed to the contrary extremes, would be frozen to ice, and buried under a long oppression of dismal and destructive darkness.

I cannot forbear taking notice, that, in this compound motion of the earth, the one in no wise *interferes* with the other, but both are perfectly *compatible*. Is it not thus, with the precepts of religion, and the needful affairs of the present life; not excepting even the innocent gratifications of our appetites?—Some, I believe, are apt to imagine, that they must *renounce* society, if they devote themselves to CHRIST, and abandon all the satisfactions of *this* world, if they once become zealous candidates for the felicity of *another*.—But this is a very mistaken notion, or else a very injurious representation, of the doctrine which is according to godliness. It was never intended to drive men into deserts; but to lead them, through the peaceful and pleasant paths of wisdom, into the blissful regions of life eternal. It was never intended to strike off the wheels of *business*, or cut in sunder the sinews of *industry*; but rather to make men industrious, from a principle of *conscience*, not from the instigations of

* With what amazing *speed*, this vessel, (if I may carry on the allusion), filled with a multitude of nations, and freighted with all their possessions, makes her way through the aetherial space; see page 100 in note.

avarice; that so they may promote their immortal happiness, even while they provide for their temporal maintenance. It has no design to extirpate our passions, but only to restrain their irregularities; neither would it damp the delights of sense, but prevent them from evaporating into vanity, and subsiding into gall. —A person may be chearful among his friends, and yet joyful in God. He may taste the sweets of his earthly estate; and, at the same time, cherish his hopes of a nobler inheritance in heaven. The *trader* may prosecute the demands of commerce, without neglecting to negotiate the affairs of his salvation. The *warrior* may wear his sword; may draw, in a just cause, that murderous weapon; and yet be a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST, and obtain the crown that fadeth not away. The *parent* may lay up a competent portion for his children, and not forfeit his title to the treasures, either of grace or glory. —So far is Christianity from obstructing any valuable interest, or with-holding any real pleasure; that it evidently advances the one, and improves the other. Just as the *diurnal* and *annual* motions, are so far from *clashing*, that they perfectly *accord*; and, instead of being destructive of each other, by mutually blending their effects, they give proportion and harmony to time, fertility and innumerable benefits to nature.

To us, that dwell on its surface, the earth is by far the *most extensive* orb, that our eyes can any where behold. It is also clothed with verdure; *distinguished* by trees; and adorned with a variety of beautiful decorations. Whereas, to a spectator placed on one of the planets, it wears an *uniform* aspect; looks all luminous, and *no larger* than a spot. To beings, who dwell at still greater distances, it entirely disappears. — That which we call, alternately, the morning, or the evening-star; as in one part of her orbit, she rides foremost in the procession of night; in the other, ushers in, and anticipates the dawn; is a *planetary world*. Which, with the four others, that so wonderfully vary

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ry their mystic dance, are in themselves *dark* bodies, and shine only by *reflection*: have fields, and seas, and skies of their own: are furnished with all accommodations for *animal* subsistence, and are supposed to be the abodes of *intellectual* life. All which, together with this our earthly habitation, are dependent on that grand dispenser of divine munificence, the sun; receive their light from the distribution of his rays, and derive their comforts from his benign agency.

THE *sun*, that seems to perform its daily stages through the sky, is, in this respect *, *fixed* and immoveable. It is the great axle of heaven, about which the globe we inhabit, and other more spacious orbs, wheel their stated courses.—The sun, though seemingly *smaller* than the *dial* it illuminates, is abundantly *larger* † than this whole *earth*; on which so many lofty mountains rise, and such vast oceans roll. A line, extending from side to side, through the centre of that resplendent orb, would measure more than eight hundred thousand miles: a girdle, formed to go round its circumference, would require a length of millions: and were its solid contents to be computed, the account would even confound our understanding, and be almost beyond the power of language to express ‡.—Are we startled at these reports of philosophy? Are we ready to cry out, in a transport of surprise; How *mighty* is the *Being*, who kindled such a prodigious fire; and keeps alive, from

* I say, in this respect; that I may not seem to forget or exclude the revolution of the sun round its own axis.

† A hundred thousand times, according to the *lowest* reckoning Sir *Isaac Newton* computes the sun to be 900,000 times bigger than the earth. *Religious Philosopher*, p. 749.

‡ Dr *Derham*, after having calculated the dimensions of the planets, adds, "Amazing as these masses are, they are all far outdone by that stupendous globe of light, the sun; which as it is the fountain of light and heat, to all the planets about it, so doth it far surpass them all in its bulk: its apparent diameter being computed at 822,148 *English* miles, its ambit at 2,582,873 miles, and its solid contents at 290,271,000,000,000,000." *Astro-Theology* Book I. chap. II.

age to age, such an enormous mass of flame?—Let us attend our philosophic guides, and we shall be brought acquainted with speculations, incomparably more enlarged and amazing.

This sun, with all its attendant planets, is but a very little part of the grand machine of the universe. Every *star*, though, in appearance, no bigger than the *diamond*, that glitters upon a lady's ring; is really a *vast globe*, like the sun in size, and in glory; no less spacious, no less luminous, than the radiant source of our day. So that every star is, not barely a world, but the *centre* of a magnificent *system*; has a retinue of worlds, irradiated by its beams, and revolving round its attractive influence. All which are lost to our sight, in unmeasurable wilds of æther.—That the stars appear like so many diminutive, and scarce distinguishable *points*, is owing to their immense, and inconceivable *distance*. Immense and inconceivable indeed it is; since a ball, shot from the loaded cannon, and flying with unabated rapidity, must travel, at this impetuous rate, almost seven hundred thousand years *, before it could reach the *nearest* of these twinkling luminaries.

Can any thing be more wonderful than these observations? Yes: there are *truths* far more *stupendous*; there are *scenes* far more *unbounded*. As there is no end of the Almighty Maker's greatness; so no imagination can set limits to his creating hand.—Could you soar beyond the moon, and pass through all the planetary choir: could you wing your way to the highest apparent *star*, and take your stand on one of those loftiest pinnacles of heaven: you would, there, see *other skies* expanded; *another sun*, distributing his inexhaustible beams by day; *other stars*, that gild the horrors of the alternate night, and *other* †, perhaps nobler

* See *Religious Philosopher*, p. 819.—Where the exact computation is 691,600 years.

† See *Astro-Theology*, book II. chap. II.—Where the author, having assigned various reasons, to support this theory of our *mar-*
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bler *systems*, established; established, in unknown profusion, through the boundless dimensions of space. —Nor does the dominion of the universal Sovereign terminate *there*. Even at the end of this vast tour, you would find yourself advanced no farther than the suburbs of creation; arrived only at the *frontiers* of the great JEHOVAH's kingdom *.

ARE we struck with amazement, at this little *sketch* of a very little *part* of his works? How then must we be lost in wonder, at the consideration of the *CREATOR himself*! Who is so high, that he looks down on the highest of these dazzling spheres, and sees even the summit of creation in a vale: so great, that this prodigious extent of space, is but a point in his presence; and all this *confluence* of *worlds*, as the *lightest atom*, that fluctuates in air, and disports in the meridian ray †.

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dern astronomers, adds—" Besides (the forementioned) strong probabilities, we have this farther recommendation of such an account of the universe, that it is far *more* magnificent, and worthy of the infinite *Creator*, than any other of the narrower schemes."

* *Job*, after a most sublime dissertation, on the mighty works of God; as they are scattered through universal nature, from the heights of heaven, to the very depths of hell; closes the magnificent account, with this noble acknowledgment; *Lo! these are parts of his ways*. Or, as the original word more literally signifies, and may, I think, be more elegantly rendered; These are only the *skirts*, the *very uttermost borders* of his works. No more than a small preface to the immense volume of the creation—From the Hebrew **קצוץ**—*extremities*—I cannot forbear thinking on the *extreme* and very attenuated *fibres* of the root, when compared with the whole substance of the *trunk*; or, on the *exquisitely small* size of the *capillary vessels*, when compared with the whole structure of the body. *Job* xxvi. 14.

† This puts me in mind of a very fine remark on a *scriptural beauty*; and a solid *correction* of the common *translation*; made by that learned, sagacious, and devout expositor *Vitringa*.—Is. xl. 15. We find it written of the Supreme Being, that *he taketh up the isles*, as a *very little thing*. Which our critic observes, is neither answerable to the import of the original, nor consonant to the structure of the discourse. The prophet had no intention to inform mankind, what the Almighty could *do*, with regard to the islands, if he pleased to exert his power: but his design was to shew, how insignificant, or rather

O! thou sublime and incomprehensibly glorious God, how am I overwhelmed with awe, and sunk into the lowest prostration of mind; when I consider thy "*excellent greatness*," together with my own littleness and *insignificancy*!—Is there not most abundant reason, to be even confounded at the remembrance; that, excessively mean as I am, I should ever entertain one *conceited apprehension* of myself? should feel the least elatement of thought, in the presence of so majestic and adorable a Being?—Were I possessed of all the *high perfections*, that accomplish and adorn the angels of light; yet, amidst all these noble endowments, I would fall down in the *deepest abasement* at thy feet. Lost in the infinitely superior blaze, of thy uncreated glories; I would confess myself to be less than nothing, and vanity.—How much more ought I to maintain the most unfeigned humiliation, before thy Divine Majesty; who am not only dust and ashes, but a compound of imperfection and depravity!

WHILE, beholding this vast expanse, I learn my own extreme meanness; I would also discover the abject littleness, which is in all *terrestrial things*.—What is the earth, with all her ostentatious scenes, compared with this astonishing furniture of the skies? What, but a dim *speck*, hardly perceivable in the *map* of the universe? It is observed, by a very judicious writer *, that if the sun himself, which enlightens this part of the creation, was extinguished; and all the host of

other what mere nothings *they are*, in his esteem, and before his Majesty.—The islands, says he, though so *spacious*, as to afford room for the erection of kingdoms, and the abode of nations; though so strong, as to withstand, for many thousands of years, the raging and reiterated assaults of the whole watery world; are yet, before the JEHOVAH, *small* as the minutest grain, which the eye can scarce discern; *light* as the feathered mote, which the least breath carries away like a tempest.—אִיִּם כְּטוֹף אֶתְרוֹ *Insulae sunt sicut quid, quod a volat. The deep-rooted islands are as the volatile atom, which, by the gentlest undulations of the air, is waisted to and fro in perpetual agitation.*

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planetary worlds, that move about him, were annihilated; they would not be missed, by an eye that can take in the whole compass of nature, any more than a grain of sand upon the sea-shore. The bulk of which they consist, and the space which they occupy, is so exceedingly little in comparison of the whole; that their loss would scarce leave a blank, in the immensity of God's works.—If then, not our globe only, but this whole system, be so very diminutive; what is a kingdom, or a county? What are a few *lordships*, or the so much admired *patrimonies* of those, who are styled wealthy*? When I measure them with my own little pittance, they swell into enormous dimensions. But, when I take the boundless universe for my standard, how scanty is their size, how contemptible their figure! They shrink into proud and *pompous nothings*†.

When the keen-eyed eagle soars above all the feathered race, and leaves her very sight below: when she wings her towering way up the steep of heaven; and steadily gazing on the meridian sun, accounts its *beaming splendors* all *her own*: does she then regard with any solicitude, the *mote* that is flying in the air, or the *dust* which she shook from her feet? And shall this eternal mind of mine, which is capable of contemplating its Creator's glory; which is intended to enjoy the visions of his countenance: shall this *eternal mind*, endued with such great capacities, and made for such exalted ends, be so *ignobly ambitious*, as to sigh for the tinsels of state; or so *poorly covetous*, as to grasp after ample territories on a needle's point.—O! no: while such my considerations, I feel my sentiments expand, and my wishes acquire a turn of sublimity. Such vast surveys assimilate the soul, and make her truly great. My throbbing desires after worldly grandeur die away; and I find myself, if no

* *Juvat inter sidera vagantem divitum pavimenta ridere, & totam cunctis auro suo terram.* Senec.

† *Cervelle grandia inania.*

Watts' Hor. Ly.
possesse

possessed of power, yet superior to its charms.—Too long, must I own, have my affections been *pinioned* by vanity, and *immured* in this earthly clod. But these thoughts break the *shackles* *: these objects open the door of *liberty*: my heart, fired by such noble prospects, weighs anchor from this little nook, and coasts no longer about its contracted shores; dotes no longer on its painted shells. The *immensity* of things is her range; and an *infinity* of bliss is her aim.

BEHOLD this immense expanse, and admire the *condescension* of thy GOD.—In this manner, an inspired and princely astronomer, improved his survey of the nocturnal heavens. *When I consider thy heavens, even the works of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; I am smitten with wonder at thy glory, and cry out in a transport of gratitude, LORD, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him †?* “How amazing, how charming, is that divine grace, which is pleased to bow down its *sacred regards*, to so foolish and *worthless* a creature! Yea, disdains not, from the height of infinite exaltation, to extend its kind providential care, to our most minute concerns!—But that the everlasting Sovereign should give his Son, to be our incarnate Saviour, what a miracle is this of condescending goodness! or rather, what are all *miracles*, what are all *mysteries*, to this *ineffable gift*!”

Had the *brightest archangel* been commissioned to come down, with the olive-branch of peace in his hand; and to signify his eternal Maker's readiness to be reconciled: on our bended knees, with tears of

* The soul of man was made to walk the skies,
Delightful outlet of her prison here!
There, disincumber'd from her chains, the ties
Of toys terrestrial, she can rove at large;
There freely can respire, dilate, extend,
In full proportion let loose all her powers.

joy, and a torrent of thankfulness, we ought to have received the transporting news. But when, instead of such an angelic envoy, HE sends HIS *only begotten Son*; his Son beyond all thought illustrious, to make us the gracious overture:—sends him from the “habitation of his holiness and glory,” to put on all the innocent *infirmities of mortality*, and dwell in a tabernacle of clay:—sends him, not barely to make us a *transient visit*, but to abide *many years* in our inferior and miserable world:—sends him, not to exercise dominion over monarchs, but to wear out his *life* in the ignoble form of a *servant*; and, at last, to make his exit, under the infamous character of a *malefactor*! Was ever love like this? Did ever grace stoop so low*?—Should the sun be shorn of all his radiant honours, and degraded into a *clod* of the vallies; should all the dignitaries of heaven be deposed from their thrones, and degenerate into *insects* of a day; *great, great* would be the abasement. But *nothing* to

* This reminds me of a very noble piece of *sacred oratory*, where, in a fine series of the most beautiful gradations, the apostle displays the admirably condescending kindness of our Saviour.—He thought it no robbery, it was his indisputable right, to be equal with the infinite, self-existent, immortal GOD: yet, in mercy to sinners, He emptied himself of the incommunicable honours, and laid aside the robes of incomprehensible glory.—When he entered upon his mediatorial state, instead of acting in the grand capacity of universal Sovereign, he took upon him the form of a servant. And not the form of those ministering spirits, whose duty is dignity itself; who are throned, though adoring.—He took not on him the nature of angels, but stooped incomparably lower. Assumed a body of animated dust, and was made in the likeness of men; those inferior and depraved creatures.—Astonishing condescension! but not sufficient for the overflowing richness of the Redeemer’s love. For, being found in *fashion as a man*, he humbled himself farther still. Occupied the lowest place, where all was low and ignoble. He not only submitted to the yoke of the divine law, but also bore the infirmities, and ministered to the necessities, of mortals. He even washed the feet of others, and had not where to lay his own head.—Yea, he carried his meritorious humiliation, to the very deepest degrees of possible abasement. He became obedient unto death—and not to a common or natural death, but a death more infamous than the gibbet; more torturous than the rack—even the accursed death of the cross, Phil. ii. 6. 7. 8.

thine,

thine, most blessed Jesus; *nothing* to thine, thou Prince of peace; when for us men, and for our salvation, thou didst not abhor the coarse accommodations of the *manger*; thou didst not decline even the gloomy horrors of the *grave*.

It is well the sacred oracles have given this doctrine the most reiterated and incontestable evidence. Otherwise, so prodigious a favour must stagger our belief.—Could HE, who *launches* all these planetary globes through the *illimitable* void: and leads them on, from age to age, in their extensive career: could HE resign his hands, to be *confined* by the girding cord; and his back to be *plowed* by the bloody scourge?—Could HE, who crowns all the stars with *inextinguishable brightness*; be himself defiled with *sitting*, and disfigured with the thorny scar? It is the greatest of *wonders*, and yet the surest of *truths*.

O! ye mighty orbs, that roll along the spaces of the sky; I wondered, a little while ago, at your vast dimensions, and ample circuits. But now my amazement ceases; or rather, is entirely swallowed up by a much more stupendous subject. Methinks, your *enormous bulk* is shrivelled to an *atom*; your *prodigious revolutions* are contracted to a *span*; while I muse upon the far more elevated heights, and unfathomable depths; the infinitely more extended lengths, and unlimited breadths, of this *love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS* *.

While I behold this vast expanse; I see a mirror, that represents, in the most awful colours, the greatness of the Creator's glory, and the *heinousness* of human guilt.—*Ten thousand volumes*; wrote on purpose, to display the aggravations of my various acts of disobedience; could not so effectually convince me of their inconceivable enormity, as the consideration of that *all-glorious Person* †; who, to make an atonement for them, spilt the last drop of his blood.—*I have*

* Eph. iii. 18. 19.

† Quo quisque altius ascendit in agnitione CHRISTI, eo profundius peccati atrocitatem cognoscat.

sinned, may every child of Adam say; and what shall I do unto thee, O thou observer of men *? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? Vain commutation! and such as would be rejected by the blessed God, with the utmost abhorrence.—Will all the *potentates*, that sway the sceptre in a thousand kingdoms, devote their sacred and honoured lives, to rescue an obnoxious creature from the stroke of vengeance? Alas! it must cost more, vastly more, to expiate the malignity of sin, and save a guilty wretch from hell.—Will all the *principalities* of heaven be content to assume my nature, and resign themselves to death for my pardon †? Even this would be too mean a satisfaction,

* Job vii. 20. Not *preserver*, as it stands in our version, but *observer of men*. Which phrase, as it expresses the strict and incessant inspection of the divine eye; as it intimates the absolute impossibility, that any transgression should *escape* the divine notice; is evidently most proper, both to assign the *reason*, and heighten the *emphasis* of the context.

† Milton sets this thought in a very poetical and striking light.—All the sanctities of heaven, stand round the throne of the supreme Majesty. God foresees and foretels the *fall* of man; the ruin which will unavoidably ensue on his transgression; and the utter impossibility, of his being ever able to extricate himself, from the abyss of misery.

He, with his whole posterity, must die;
Die he, or justice must; unless for him.
Some other able, and as willing, pay.
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.

After which affecting representation, intended to raise the most tender emotions of pity; the following inquiry is addressed to all the surrounding angels;

Say, heav'nly powers, where shall we find such love?
Which of you will be mortal, to redeem
Man's mortal crime? and die, the dead to save?
He ask'd; but all the heav'nly choir stood mute,
And silence was in heav'n.—

There is, to me at least, an inimitable spirit and beauty in the circumstance.—That such an innumerable multitude, of generous and compassionate beings, should be struck dumb with surprize and terror, at the very mention of the deadly forfeiture and ransom set! No language is so eloquent as this silence. Words could not possibly

satisfaction, for inexorable justice; too scanty a réparation of God's injured honour. So flagrant is human guilt, that nothing, but a *victim of infinite dignity*, could constitute an adequate propitiation. — *He*, who said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" Let there be a firmament, and immediately the blue curtains floated in the sky; *He* must take flesh; *HE* must feel the fierce torments of crucifixion; and pour out his soul in agonies, if ever such transgressors are pardoned.

How vast is that debt; which all the wealth of both the *Indies* cannot discharge! How vitiated that habit of body; which all the drugs produced by nature herself, cannot rectify! But how much more ruined was thy *condition*, O my soul! how much more *heinous* were thy *crimes*? Since nothing less than the sufferings and death of Messiah, the Son of God, and radiant image of his glory, could *effect* thy *recovery*, or *cancel* thy *iniquity*. — Though, perhaps, thou art not sunk so very deep in pollution, as some of the most abandoned profligates; yet remember the inestimable ransom, paid to redeem thee from everlasting destruction. Remember this, and "never open thy mouth any more *," either to *murmur* at the divine chastisements, or to *glory* in thy own attainments. Remember this; and even "loath thyself † for the multitude of thy provocations," and thy great baseness.

ONCE more: let me view this beautiful, this magnificent expanse; and conceive some juster apprehensions, of the unknown *riches* of my *Saviour's atonement*. — I am informed by a writer who cannot mistake, that the High Priest of my profession, who have expressed, in so emphatical a manner, the *dreadful nature* of the task; the *absolute inability* of any or all creatures to execute it; the super-eminent and *matchless love* of the eternal Son, in undertaking the tremendous work; not only without reluctance, but unsought and unimplored; with readiness, alacrity, and delight. *Paradise Lost*, Book II. line 209. edit. Benti.

* Ezek. xvi. 63.

† Chap. xxxvi. 31.

was also the sacrifice for my sins, is *higher than the heavens* * ; more exalted in dignity, more bright with glory, than all the heavenly mansions, and all their illustrious inhabitants. If my heart was humbled, at the consideration of its excessive guilt ; how do all my drooping powers revive, at this delightful thought ! The poor criminal, that seemed to be *tottering* on the very brink of the infernal pit ; is *raised*, by such a belief, even to the *portals* of paradise. My self-abasement, I trust, will always continue ; but my fears, under the influence of such a conviction, are quite gone † . I do not, I cannot, doubt the efficacy of this propitiation. *While I see a glimpse*, of its matchless excellency ; and *verily believe* myself, interested in its merits ; I know not what it is, to feel any misgiving suspicions ; but am steadfast in faith, and joyful through hope.

Be my iniquities like debts of millions of talents, here is more than full payment for all that mighty sum. Let the enemy of mankind, and accuser of the brethren, load me with invectives, before the dreadful tribunal ; this one *plea*, *A divine Redeemer died*, most thoroughly quashes every *indictment*. For, though

* Heb. vii. 26.

† I am sorry to find, that some of my readers were a little disgusted at this expression, "*My fears are quite gone.*" As thinking, it discovered a tincture of arrogance in the writer, and tended to discourage the weak Christian. But I hope, a *more mature* consideration will acquit me, from *both* these charges. — For, what has the author said ? Only, that at some *peculiarly happy* moments, when the Holy Ghost bears witness of *CHRIST* in his heart, and he is favoured with a glimpse of the Redeemer's matchless excellency, — that, in these *bright intervals* of life, his trembling fears, with regard to the decisive sentence of the great tribunal, are turned into pleasing expectations. And what is there in such a declaration, offensive to the *strictest* modesty, or dispiriting to the *weakest* believer ? Instead of striking terror, it points out the way to obtaining a *settled* tranquillity. Its natural tendency is, to engage the serious mind in a *more constant* and *attentive* meditation, on the unknown merits of the divine *MEDIA TOR*. And were we more thoroughly acquainted, more deeply affected, with his unutterable dignity ; I am persuaded, our uneasy apprehensions would *proportion* by vanish ; our faith be established, our hopes brightened, and our joys enlarged.

there

there be much turpitude, and manifold transgressions, "there is no condemnation to those that are in CHRIST JESUS."—Nay, were I chargeable with all the vilest deeds, that have been committed in every age of the world, by every nation of men; even in this most deplorable case, I need not sink into despair. Even such guilt, though grievous beyond all expression, is not to be compared with the *abundance of grace* and righteousness, which is in the *incarnate Divinity*.—How great, how transcendently glorious, are the *perfections* of the adored JEHOVAH! So great, so superlatively precious, is the *expiation* of the dying JESUS. It is impossible for the human mind to *exalt* this atonement *, too highly; it is impossible for the *humble penitent* to *confide* in it, too steadily. The scriptures, the scriptures of eternal truth, have said it, (exult, my soul, in the belief of it!), that the blood on which we have to rely, is GOD'S *own blood* †; and therefore all-sufficient to expiate, omnipotent to save.

David, that most egregious sinner, but more exemplary saint, seems to have been well acquainted with this comfortable truth.—What else can be the import of that very remarkable, but devout declaration? *Thou shalt purge me ‡ with hyssop, and I shall be*

* This doctrine, though rich with *consolation* to the ruined sinner; yet, is it not likely to open a door for *licentiousness*; and embolden transgressors to prosecute their *VICES*?—No: it is the most powerful motive to that *genuine* repentance, which flows from an ardent love of GOD; and operates in a hearty detestation of all sin, and an unfeigned desire to *abound* in the works of obedience. One who knew the unmeasurable goodness of the LORD, and was no less angry to the sinful perverseness of our nature, says, *There is mercy with thee: THEREFORE shalt thou be feared*, Psal. cxxx. 4.—Words, full to my purpose; which at once add the *highest* authority to this sentiment, and direct our minds to its proper influence, and due improvement.

† ACTS xx. 28.

‡ Psal. li. 7. *Thou shalt purge*. I prefer this translation before the new one. Because, this speaks the language of a more *steadfast belief*, and gives the *highest honour* to the divine goodness. Were the words intended to bear no more, than the common *petitionary* sense; and not to be expressive of a noble *plerophory* of faith; they would rather have been—*אֶתְּכַפֵּר* and *יְכַפֵּר* imperatives, not *salutes*.

clean:

clean : thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.—" I have been guilty, I must confess, of the
 " most complicated and shocking crimes : crimes, in-
 " flamed by every aggravating circumstance, with re-
 " gard to myself, my neighbour, and my God.
 " *Myself*, who have been blessed above men, and the
 " distinguished favourite of Providence ; *my neigh-*
 " *bour*, who, in the most dear and tender interests,
 " has been irreparably injured ; *my God*, who might
 " justly expect the most grateful returns of duty, in-
 " stead of such enormous violations of his law.
 " Yet, all horrid and execrable as *my offence* is, it is
 " nothing to the superabundant *merit* of that great
 " *Redeemer*, who was promised from the foundations
 " of the world ; in whom all my fathers trusted ;
 " who is the hope of all the ends of the earth.
 " Though my conscience be more *loathsome*, with
 " adulterous impurity, than the *dunghill* ; though the
 " most barbarous of murders has rendered it, even
 " *black* as the gloom of *hell* ; yet, washed in " the
 " fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness *," I
 " shall be—I say not *pure only*, this were a disparage-
 " ment to the efficacy of my Saviour's death ; but I
 " shall be fair as the *lily*, and white as the *snow*.
 " Nay, let me not derogate from the glorious object
 " of my confidence ; cleansed by this sovereign stream,
 " I shall be *fairer* than the full-blown lily, *whiter*
 " than the new-fallen snows."

POWER, saith the scripture, *belongeth unto GOD* †.
 —And in what majestic lines is this attribute of JE-
 HOVAH written, throughout the whole volume of
 the creation ? Especially, through those magnificent
 pages, unfolded in yonder starry regions. Which
 are therefore stiled, by the sweet and sublime singer
 of *Israel*, " The firmament of his power ‡." Be-
 cause the grand *exploits* of *Omnipotence* are there dis-
 played, with the utmost pomp ; and recorded in the
 most legible characters.

* Zech. xiii. 1.

† Psal. lxxii. 11.

‡ Psal. cl. 1.

Who

Who, that looks upward to the midnight sky ; and, with an eye of reason, beholds its rolling wonders ; can forbear inquiring, of *what* were these mighty orbs *formed* ?—Amazing to relate ! They were produced without materials. They sprung from emptiness itself. The *stately fabric* of universal nature emerged out of *nothing*.—What *instruments* were used by the supreme Architect, to fashion the parts with such exquisite niceness, and give so beautiful a polish to the surface ? With what were the various pieces of the complicated structure *cemented* ; and how was all *connected* into one finely proportioned, and nobly finished whole ?—A *bare fiat* accomplished all. LET THEM BE, said GOD. He added no more ; and immediately the marvellous edifice arose ; adorned with every beauty ; displaying innumerable perfections ; and declaring, amidst admiring seraphs, its great Creator's praise. “ By the *word* of the LORD were “ the heavens made, and all the host of them by the “ *breath* of his mouth *.”—What wonderful force *fixed* some of those vast globes on an immoveable basis ! What irresistible impulse *bowled* others ; through the dark profound ? And what coercive energy *confined* their impetuous courses, within the nicest, strictest bounds ?—Nothing but his *sovereign will*. For all things were at first constituted, and all to this day abide, “ according to his ordinance.”

Without any toilsome assiduity ; or laborious pro-

* If this thought is admitted a second time, and suffered to enoble the next paragraph ; it is partly, because of its unequalled *sublimity* ; partly, because it awakens the most *grand idea* of creating power ; and partly, because the *practice* of the *psalmist*, an authority too great to be controverted, is my precedent.—The beautiful stanza quoted from Psal. xxxiii. 6. is a proof, how thoroughly the royal poet entered into the *majesty* of the *Mosaic narration* : the repetition of the sentiment, *vers. 9* intimates, how peculiarly he was charmed with that *noble manner* of describing the divine operations : while the turn of his own composition shews, how perfectly he possessed the same *elevated way* of thinking. And this long before Longinus wrote the celebrated treatise, which has taught the Heathen, as well as the Christian world, to admire the *dignity of the Jewish legislator's stile*. Vide Longin. de Sublim. Sect. IX.

cess; to raise—to touch—to *spe*ak such a multitude of enormous bodies into *being*;—to *la*unch them through the spaces of the sky, as an arrow from the hand of a giant;—to impress on such *unwieldy masses* a motion, far outstripping the swiftness of the winged creation *;—and to *contin*ue them in the same *rapid whirl*, for thousands and thousands of years;—what an astonishing instance of infinite might is this!—Can any thing be impossible to the LORD, the LORD GOD; the Creator and Controuler of all the ends of the earth, all the borders of the universe? Rather, is not all that we count *difficult*, perfect *ease* to that glorious Being, who only spake, and the world was made †? Who only gave command, and the stupendous axle was lodged fast, the lofty wheels moved complete?—What a sure defence, O my soul, is this everlasting strength of thy God! Be this thy continual *refuge*, in the article of *danger*; this thy never-failing *resource* in every time of *need*.

What cannot this uncontrollable power of the great JEHOVAH effect for his people? Be their miseries ever so galling, cannot this GOD relieve them? Be their wants ever so numerous, cannot this GOD supply them? Be their corruptions within ever so inveterate; or their temptations without ever so importunate; cannot this mighty, mighty GOD, subdue the one, and fortify them against the other?—Should *trials*, with an incessant vehemence, *sift* thee as wheat; should *tribulation*, with a weight of woes, almost *grind*

* To give *one* instance of this remark.—The *earth*, in the diurnal revolution which it performs on its own axis, *whirls about* at the rate of above a thousand miles an hour. And as the great orbit, which it describes annually round the sun, is reckoned at 540 millions of miles, it must *travel* near a million and a half each *day*.—What an *amazing force* must be requisite, to protrude so vast a globe: and wheel it on, loaded as it is with huge mountains, and ponderous rocks, at such a prodigious degree of rapidity! It surpasses human conception!—How natural, how pertinent, how almost necessary, after such an observation, is the acknowledgment made by holy *Job*! I *knew* that *THOU canst do every thing*, and *that no thought can be with-holden from thee*, chap. xlii. 2.

† Psal. xxxiii. 9.

thee

thee to powder; should *pleasure*, with her bewitching smiles, solicit thee to *delicious ruin*; yet, "hold thee fast by God," and lay thy help upon him that is omnipotent *. Thou canst not be involved in such *calamitous circumstances*, or exposed to such *imminent peril*; but thy God, whom thou serveest, is able to support thee under the one, and to deliver thee from the other.—To support! to deliver! O let me not dishonour the unlimited greatness of his power. He is able to exalt thee, from the *deepest distress*, to the most *triumphant joy*; and to make even a *complication* of

* It is a most charming description, as well as comfortable promise, which we find in Is. xl. 29. 30. 31.—He giveth power to the feeble; and to them that have no might at all, he not only imparteth, but increaseth strength; making it to abound, where it did not so much as exist.—Without this aid of JEHOVAH, even the youths, in the very prime of their vigour and activity, shall become languid in their work, and weary in their course. And the young men, to whose resolution and abilities nothing seemed impracticable, shall not only not succeed, but utterly fail, and miscarry in their enterprizes.—Whereas they that wait upon the LORD, and rely on his grace, shall press on, with a generous ardor, from one degree of religious improvement to another: instead of exhausting, they shall renew their strength; difficulties shall animate, and toil invigorate them; they shall mount up, as with soaring wings, above all opposition; they shall be carried through every discouragement, as eagles cleave the yielding air: They shall run, with speed and alacrity, the way of GOD's commandments, and not be weary: They shall hold on with constancy and perseverance, in those peaceful paths, and not faint; but arrive at the end of their progress, and win the prize of their high calling.

To this most cheering doctrine, permit me to add its no less beautiful and delightful contrast. Eliphaz, speaking of the enemies of the righteous, says—**לֹא דָכָח קוֹמִי**—which is rendered by a great critic in sacred learning, *Nihil excisum factio nobis adversaria*.—We should reckon our language acquitted itself tolerably well, if, when depreciating the abilities of an adversary, it should represent them weak as the scorched thread, feeble as the dissolving smoke. But these are cold forms of speech, compared with the eloquence of the East. According to the genius of our Bible, *All the power that opposes the godly, is a mere nothing; or, to speak with a more emphatical air of contempt, a destroyed, an extirpating nothing*.—Admire this expression, ye that are charmed with daring images, and (what Tully calls *verbum ardens*) a spirited and glowing diction.—Remember this declaration, ye that fight the good fight of faith. The united force of all your enemies, be it ever so formidable to the eye of flesh, be it ever so formidable to the eye of flesh, before your almighty Guardian, *Nihil nihilissimum*, not only nothing, but less than nothing, and vanity. Job xxii. 20.

evils *work together* for thy everlasting good. *He is able*, not only to accomplish what I have been speaking, but *to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask, or think* *.

O! the *wretched condition* of the wicked, who have this LORD of all power for their enemy! O! the *desperate madness* of the ungodly, who provoke the Almighty to jealousy!—Befotted creatures! are you able to contend with your Maker, and enter the lists against incensed Omnipotence? Can you *bear* the fierceness of his wrath, or sustain the vengeance of his lifted arm? At his presence, though awfully serene, the hills melt like wax, and the “mountains skip like frightened lambs.” At the least intimation of his displeasure, the foundations of nature rock, and the “pillars of heaven tremble.” How then can a *withered leaf* endure, when “his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire?”—Or can any thing *screen* a guilty worm, when the great and terrible God shall *whet his glittering sword*, and *his hand take hold on inexorable judgment*? When *that hand* which shoots the planets, masses of excessive bulk †, with such surprising celerity through the sky:
that

* I should, in this place, avoid swelling the notes any farther, was it not to take notice of the inimitable passage quoted above, and to be found Eph. iii. 20.—Which, if I do not greatly mistake, is the most noble representation of divine power, that it is possible for words to frame.—To do all that our tongue can ask, is a miracle of might. But we often think more than we can express, and are actuated with “groanings unutterable.” Yet, to answer these vast desires, is not beyond the accomplishment of our heavenly Father.—Nay, to make all manner of blessings commensurate to the *largest stretch* of human expectations, is a *small thing* with the God of glory. He is able to do *above all*, that the most enlarged apprehension can imagine; yea, to do *abundantly more*, *exceeding abundantly more*, than the mind itself, in the utmost exertion of its faculties, is capable of *wishing*, or knows how to *conceive*.

† One of the planets (*Saturn*) is supposed to be more than 90 times as big as the globe on which we live. The largest of the planets (*Jupiter*) is reckoned above 200 times vaster, than this vast collection of mighty kingdoms, spacious forests, towering moun-
tains,

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that hand which darts the comets to such unmeasurable distances, beyond the orbit of our remotest planet, beyond the pursuit of the strongest eye; when THAT HAND is stretched out to *punish*, can the munition of rocks, the intervention of seas, or even interposing worlds, *divert* the blow?—Consider this, *ambition*; and bow thy haughty crest. Consider this, *disobedience*; and bend thy iron sinew. O! consider this, all ye that forget, or affront, the tremendous JEHOVAH. He can, by a single act of his will, lay the *universe* in utter ruin; and can he want power to bring *you*, in a moment, to the dust of death, or to the flames of hell? He has,—I say not, ten thousand lightnings to scorch you to ashes; ten thousand thunders to crush you into atoms; but, what is unspeakably more dreadful,—he has an *army of terrors*, even in the *look* of his angry countenance: his very frown is worse than destruction.

I cannot dismiss this subject, without admiring the *patience* of the blessed GOD. Who, though so “strong” and powerful, yet is provoked every day.”—Surely, as is his majesty, so is his mercy, his pity altogether commensurate to his power. If I *vilify* but the *name* of an earthly monarch; I lose my liberty, and am confined to the dungeon. If I *appear in arms*, and draw the sword against my national sovereign; my life is forfeited, and my very blood will scarce atone for the crime. But thee I have dishonoured, O! thou King immortal and invisible! against thee my breast has cherished *secret disaffection*; my behaviour has risen up in *open rebellion*: and yet I am spared, I am preserved. Instead of being banished from thy presence; I sit at thy table, and am fed from thy hand. Instead of pursuing me with *thunderbolts* of vengeance, thy *favours* surround me on every side. That arm, that

stains, and boundless oceans.—Such enormous magnitude! winged with such prodigious speed!—It raises astonishment beyond expression.—*With GOD is terrible majesty!* Job xxxvii. 22.—*Who shall not fear THEE, O LORD, and glorify thy name?* Rev.

xy. 4.

injured arm, which might justly fall, with irretrievable ruin, on a traitor's head; is most graciously stretched out, to caress him with the tenderest endearments; to cherish him with every instance of paternal kindness. — O thou mightiest, thou best of Beings, how am I pained at my very soul, for such shameful and odious dissingenuity! Let me always abominate myself as the basest of creatures; but *adore* that unwearied long-suffering of thine, which refuses to be irritated; *love* that unremitted goodness, which no acts of ingratitude could stop, or so much as check, in its gracious current. O! let this *stubborn heart*, which duty could not bind; which threatenings could not awe; be the captive, the *willing captive*, of such triumphant beneficence.

I have often been struck with wonder at that almighty skill, which weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; which *proportioned* the waters in the hollow of its hand, and *adjusted* the dust of the earth * by a measure. But how much more marvellous is that magnificent œconomy, which *poised* the *stars* with inexpressible nicety, and *meted* out the *heavens* with a span! Where all is prodigiously vast; immensely various; and yet more than mathematical-

* *The dust of the earth*, in this sublime scripture, signifies the *dry land* or *solid* part of our globe. Which is placed in contradistinction to the whole collection of *fluid* matter, mentioned in the preceding clause. — Perhaps, this remarkable expression may be intended to intimate, not only the *extreme niceness*, which stated the dimensions of the round world, in *general*, or in the gross; but also that *particular exactness*, with which the very smallest materials that constitute its frame, (not excepting each individual atom), were calculated and disposed: — *q. d.* It is a small thing to say, No such enormous redundancies, as unnecessary ridges of mountains, were suffered to subsist. There was not so much as the least grain of sand *superfluous*, or a single particle of dust *deficient*. — As the grand aim of the description is, to celebrate the *consummate wisdom* exemplified in the creation; and to display that *perfect proportion*, with which every part tallies, coincides, and harmonizes, with the whole; I have taken leave to alter the word of our *English translation* *comprehend*, and introduce in its stead a term, equally faithful to the *Hebrew*, and more significative of the prophet's precise idea. *Is. xl. 21.*

ly exact. Surely, the *wisdom* of God manifests itself in the skies, and shines in those lucid orbs: shines on the contemplative mind, with a lustre incomparably brighter than that which their united splendors transmit to the eye.—Behold that countless multitude of globes; consider their amazing bulk; regard them as the sovereigns of so many systems, each accompanied with his planetary equipage. Upon this supposition, what a multiplicity of mighty spheres, must be perpetually running their rounds in the upper regions! Yet, none mistake their way, or *wander* from the goal, though they pass through *trackless* and unbounded fields. None *fly off* from their *orbits*, into extravagant excursions; none *press in* upon their *centre*, with too near an approach. None *interfere* with each other in their perennial passage; or *intercept* the kindly communications of another's influence*. But all their rotations proceed in eternal harmony: keeping such time, and observing such laws as are most exquisitely adapted to the perfection of the whole.

While I contemplate this “excellent wisdom which made the heavens,” and attunes all their motions; how am I abashed at that mixture of *arrogance* and *folly*, which has, at any time, inclined me to *murmur* at thy *dispensations*, O LORD! what is this but a sort of implicit treason against thy supremacy; and a tacit denial of thy infinite understanding?—Hast thou so regularly placed such a wonderful diversity of systems, through the boundless universe?—Didst thou, without any probationary essays, without any improving retouches, speak them into the most consummate perfection?—Dost thou continually superintend all their circumstances, with a sagacity that never mistakes the minutest *title* of *propriety*? And shall I be so unaccountably stupid, as to question the *justness* of thy *discernment*, in “choosing my inheritance, and fixing

* The interception of light, by means of an *eclipse*, happens very rarely: and then, is of so short a continuance, as not to be at all inconvenient; is attended with such *circumstances*, as render it rather useful than prejudicial.

"the bounds of my habitation?"—Not a *single erratum* in modelling the structure; determining the distance *; and conducting the career of *unnumbered worlds!* and shall my peevish humour presume to *censure thy interposition* with regard to the affairs of one *inconsiderable creature*: whose stature, in such a comparative view, is less than a span; and his present duration little more than a moment?

O! thou God, "in whose hand my breath is, and whose are all my ways," let such sentiments as now possess my thoughts, be always lively on my heart! These shall compose my mind into a *cheerful acquiescence*, and *thankful submission*; even when afflictions *gall* the sense, or disappointments *break* my schemes. Then shall I, like the grateful patriarch †, in all the changes of my condition, and even in the depths of distress, erect an *altar* of adoring resignation; and inscribe it with the apostle's motto, TO GOD ONLY WISE. Then, shouldst thou give me leave to be the carver of my own fortunes, I would humbly desire to relinquish the grant, and recommit the disposal of myself to thy unerring beneficence. Fully persuaded that *thy counsels*; though contrary to my froward inclinations, or even afflictive to my flesh; are incomparably more eligible, than the *blind impulse* of my own will, however soothing to animal nature.

ON a careless inspection, you perceive no accuracy or uniformity in the position of the heavenly bodies. They appear like an *illustrious chaos*; a promiscuous

* The sun in particular, (and let this serve as a specimen of that most geometrical exactness, with which the other celestial bodies are constituted; and all their circumstances regulated), the sun is formed of such a determinate magnitude, and placed at such a convenient distance,—“as not to annoy, but only refresh us, and nourish the ground with its kindly warmth. If it was larger, it would set the earth on fire: if smaller, it would leave it frozen. If it was nearer us, we should be scorched to death; if farther from us, we should not be able to live for want of heat.” *Stackhouse's History of the Bible.*

† See Gen. xii. 7, 8.

heap of shining globes ; neither ranked in order, nor moving by line. — But what *seems* confusion, is all regularity. What carries a shew of negligence, is really the result of the most masterly contrivance. You think, perhaps, they rove in their aerial flight ; but they rove by the nicest rule, and without the least error. Their circuits, though seemingly *devious* ; their mazes, though *intricate* to our apprehensions * ; are marked out, not indeed with *golden compasses*, but by the infinitely more *exact determinations* of the all-wise Spirit.

So, what wears the *appearance* of *calamity*, in the allotments appointed for the godly, has really the *nature* of a *blessing*. It issues from fatherly love, and will terminate in the richest good. If *Joseph* is snatched from the embraces of an indulgent parent, and abandoned to slavery in a foreign land ; it is in order to save the holy family from perishing by famine ; and to preserve “ the seed, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed.” If he falls into the deepest disgrace, it is on purpose that he may rise to the highest honours. Even the *confinement* of the *prison*, by the unsearchable workings of providence, opens his way to the right hand of the *throne* itself. — Let the most afflicted servant of *JESUS*, wait the final upshot of things : and he will *then* discover the apparent expediency of all those tribulations ; which *now*, perhaps, he can hardly admit, without reluctance : or suffer, without some struggles of dissatisfaction. Then, the gushing tear, and the heaving sigh, will be turned into tides of gratitude, and hymns of holy wonder.

In the mean time, let no audacious railer tax the divine procedure ; but, *adoring* where we cannot *comprehend*, let us expect the *evolution* of the mysterious plan. Then shall every eye perceive ; that the seem-

* ——— Mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolved ; yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem.

Milton.
ing.

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ing *labyrinths* of providence, were the most *direct* and *compendious* way; to effect his general purposes of grace, and to bring about each one's particular happiness *.—Then, also, shall it be clearly shewn, in the presence of applauding worlds; why, virtue pined in want, while vice rioted in affluence: why, amiable innocence so often dragged the dungeon *chain*, while horrid guilt *trailed* the *robe* of state.—That day of universal audit, that day of everlasting retribution, will not only *vindicate*, but *magnify*, the whole management of Heaven. The august sessions shall close with this unanimous, this glorious acknowledgment: “Though *clouds and darkness*, impenetrable by any human scrutiny, *were* sometimes *round about* the supreme Conductor of things; yet *righteousness and judgment were* the constant *habitation* of his seat †; “the invariable standard of all his administrations.”—While we view (if I may illustrate the grandest truths, by inferior occurrences; while we view) the *arras*, on the side of *least distinction*, it is void of any elegant fancy; without any nice strokes of art; nothing but a confused jumble of incoherent threads. No sooner is the piece beheld in its *proper aspect*, but the suspected rudeness vanishes, and the most curious arrangement takes place; we are charmed with designs of the finest taste; and figures of the most graceful forms; all is shaped with symmetry; all is clad in beauty.

THE *goodness* of God is most eminently displayed in the *skies*.—Could we take an understanding survey, of whatever is formed by the divine Architect, throughout the whole extent of *material* things; our minds would be charmed with their matchless ex-

* ————— The *moral world*,

Which, though to us it seems embroil'd, moves on
In higher order; fitted, and impell'd
By *Wisdom's* finest hand, and issuing all
In gen'ral good. —————

Thom. Winter, l. 586. last edit.

† Psal. xcvi. 2.

cellencies,

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cellencies, and our tongues echo back that great encomium, They are "very, very good." Most *beautiful** in themselves; contrived by unerring wisdom, and executed with inimitable skill: most *useful** in their functions; exactly fitting the places they fill, and completely answering the purposes for which they were intended—All the parts of the inanimate creation proclaim, both by their *intrinsic* and *relative* excellencies, the all-diffusive beneficence of their Maker.

How much more wonderful are the displays of divine indulgence, in the worlds of *life*! Because dead matter is incapable of delight; therefore, the gracious Creator has raised innumerable ranks of *perceptive existence*: such as are qualified to taste his bounty, and enjoy each a *happiness* suited to its peculiar state. With this view, he furnished the regions of inferior nature, with a most numerous series of sensitive beings. The waters teem with shoals of finny inhabitants. The dry-land swarms with animals of every order. The dwellings of the *firmament*, are occupied by multitudes of winged people. Not so much as a *green leaf*, philosophers say, but lodges and accommodates its puny animalcule tenants †.—And wherefore this diversity,

* * This *καλοκαγαθία* of the universe, and all its parts, has been very highly, and very justly, extolled, by the ancient inquirers into nature. And was, indeed, an illustrious scene, spread before the sages of the Heathen world; wherein to contemplate the goodness, and the glories, of the supreme Being.—It was nobly said, by a Pagan philosopher, on this occasion, Εἰς ἐρῶτα μεταβληθεὶς τὸν Θεὸν μέλλοντα δημιουργεῖν. That GOD, when he undertook the work of creation, transformed himself into love.—But he need not transform himself into this amiable principle; for "God is love:" as was much more loftily said by one, whom that philosopher would have termed a barbarian, 1 John iv. 8.

† A very celebrated poet, in a beautiful paragraph on this subject, informs his readers, that all nature swarms with life. In subterranean cells, the earth heaves with vital motion.—Even the hard stone, in the very inmost recesses of its impenetrable citadel, holds multitudes of animated inhabitants. The pulp of mellow fruit, and all the productions of the orchard, feed the invisible nations. Each liquid, whether of acid taste, or milder relish, abounds with various forms of sensitive existence. Nor is the pure stream, or transparent sea, without their colonies of unseen people.—In which constitution

versity, this profusion of living creatures; flying the air, treading the ground, and gliding through the paths of the sea? For this noble reason,—That the great Sovereign may exercise his superabundant goodness; that his *table* may be furnished, with millions and millions of *guests*; that he may fill, every hour, every moment, their mouths with *food*, or their hearts with *gladness*.

But, what a small theatre are three or four *elements*, for the operations of JEHOVAH's bounty! His magnificent liberality, scorns such scanty limits. If you ask, Wherefore has he created *all worlds*, and replenished them with an unknown *multiplicity* of *beings*; rising one above another, in an endless gradation of still richer endowments, and still nobler capacities? The answer is,—For the manifestation of his own glory, and especially for the *communication* of his inexhaustible *beneficence**.—The great Creator could propose no advantage to himself. His bliss is incapable of any addition. “Before the mountains “were brought forth, or ever the earth and the “world were made,” he was supremely happy, in

tion of things, we have a wonderful instance, not only of the divine goodness to those minute beings, in *giving* them a *capacity* for animal gratifications; but of his tender care for mankind, in *making* them *imperceptible* to our senses.

—————These, conceal'd
By the kind art of forming Heav'n, escape
The grosser eye of man: for, if the worlds
In worlds inclos'd should on his senses burst;
From eates ambrosial, and the nectar'd bowl,
He'd turn abhorrent; and, in dead of night,
When silence sleeps o'er all, be stunn'd with noise.

Thomson's *Summer*.

* A *sacred writer*, considering this pleasing subject; and confining his observation, within the *narrow limits* of his own country; cried out, with a mixture of amazement and gratitude, *How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!*——Who then can forbear being lost in wonder, and transported with delight; when he extends his survey, to those infinitely more *copious communications* of divine bounty; which, like salutary and refreshing streams, run through all worlds; and make, not only the *little valleys* of a single kingdom but the *immensity* of creation, *laugh and sing*? Zech. ix. 17.

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his own independent and all-sufficient Self. His grand design therefore, in erecting so many stately fabrics; and peopling them with so many tribes of inhabitants; was, to *transfuse* his exuberant *kindness*, and *impart felicity* in all its forms. Ten thousand worlds, stocked with ten thousand times ten thousand ranks, of sensitive and intelligent existence, are so many *spacious gardens*; which, with *rivers* of communicated *joy*, this ever-flowing Fountain waters continually.

BOUNDLESS *, and (which raises our idea of this divine principle, to the very highest degree of perfection) disinterested * munificence! How *inexpressibly amiable* is the blessed God, considered in this charming light! Is it possible to conceive any excellence, so adorable and lovely; as infinite benevolence, guided by unerring wisdom, and exerting almighty power, on purpose to make a whole universe happy? O my soul, what an *irresistible attractive* is here! What a most worthy object, for thy most fervent affection! Shall now every glittering toy, become a rival to this transcendently beneficent Being, and rob him of thy heart?—O! no. Let his creating arm teach thee, to *trust* in the fulness of his sufficiency:—Let his all-superintending eye incline thee, to *submit* to his decrees:—And let his bounty; so freely vouchsafed; so amply diffused; win thee to *love* him, with all the warmest affections of a grateful and admiring soul: win thee to *serve* him, not with a joyless awe, or slavish dread, but with unfeigned alacrity, and a delightful complacency.

But, if the goodness of God is so admirably seen, in the works of nature, and the favours of Providence; with what a noble superiority, does it *even*

* In this sense, *There is none good but one, that is God*. None universally and essentially good: none, whose goodness extends itself, in an infinite variety of blessings, to every capable object; or, who always dispenses his favours, from the sole principle of free and disinterested benevolence.

triumph

triumph in the *mystery of redemption**! Redemption, is the brightest mirror, in which to contemplate this most lovely attribute of the Deity. Other gifts, are only as *mites* from the divine treasury; but redemption opens, I had almost said exhausts, *all the stores* of his glorious grace. Herein, "GOD commendeth his love †:" not only manifests, but renders it perfectly marvellous: manifests it in so stupendous a manner, that it is beyond parallel; beyond thought; and "above all blessing and praise."—Was HE not thy Son, everlasting God, thy *only* Son; the Son of thy bosom from eternal ages; the highest *object* of thy complacential *delight*? Was not thy love to this adorable Son, incomparably greater than the *tendereſt* affection of *any*, or the *united* affections of *all* mortal parents? Was not the blessed JESUS more illustrious in excellency, than all angels; more exalted in dignity, than all heavens! And yet didst thou resign HIM, for poor mortals; for vile sinners? Couldst thou see him descend, from his *royal throne*; and take up his abode, in the *sordid stable*? See him forego the *honor* of the *seraphim*; and stand exposed to the reproachful *indignities* of an insolent *rabble*? See him arraigned at the bar, and sentenced to death; numbered with malefactors, and nailed to the gibbet; bathed in his own innocent blood, and pouring out

* In this, and in other parts of the *Contemplations*, the reader will observe, That the attributes of the DEITY are represented, as shining, with more distinguished lustre, in the wonders of *redemption*, than in the works of *creation*. If *such remarks* should seem to be unprecedented, or to stand in need of a vindication; permit me to subjoin the sentiments of a great critic, equally versed in both those sublime theories.—"Tully," says he, "requires, in his perfect orator, some skill in the nature of heavenly bodies; because, his mind will become more extensive and unconfined; and, when he descends to treat of human affairs, he will both think and write in a more exalted and magnificent manner. For the same reason that excellent master would have recommended the study of those great and glorious mysteries, which revelation has discovered to us; to which the noblest parts of this system of the world are as much inferior, as the creature is less excellent than the Creator. Spectator, Vol. VIII. No 633.

† Rom. v. 8.

his soul in agonies of sorrow?—Could the Father, the Father *himself*, with unknown philanthropy, say; “It must, it shall be so! My pity to rebellious man pleads, and prevails. Awake, therefore, O sword*, edged with divine wrath. Awake; and be sheathed in that *immaculate breast*; pierce that *dearly beloved heart*. I am content, that my Son endure the sharpness of death, rather than *sinful mortals* perish for ever.”—Incomprehensible love! May it, henceforward, be the favourite-subject of my *meditation*; more delightful to my musing mind, than applause to the ambitious ear! May it be the darling theme of my *discourse*; sweeter to my tongue, than the droppings of the honey-comb to my taste! May it be my choicest *comfort*, through all the changes of *life*: and my reviving *cordial*, even in the last extremities of *dissolution* itself!

A PROPHECY, contemplating, with a distant survey, this unexampled instance of almighty love, is rapt into a *transport of delight*. At a loss for proper acknowledgments, he calls upon the whole universe to aid his labouring breast, and supply his lack of praise. *Sing melodiously, ye vaulted heavens; exult, and even leap for gladness, thou cumbrous earth: ye mountains, break your long silence, and burst into peals of loudest acclamation †; for the LORD, by this precious gift, and this great salvation, hath comforted his people.—A*

* Zech. xiii. 7.

† Is. xlix. 13.—I have not adhered to our common translation, but endeavoured to preserve, somewhat more faithfully, the noble *pathos*, and inimitable *energy*, of the sacred original.—“The love of GOD manifested in a divine and dying Saviour, is a blessing of such *inconceivable richness*; as must render all acknowledgments *flat*, and all encomiums *languid*. Yet, I think, the most poetical and most *emphatical celebration* of that unspeakable instance of goodness, is contained in this rapturous exclamation of the prophet. Which intimates, with a wonderful majesty of sentiment, that even the whole compass of the *inanimate creation*; could it be *sensible* of the benefit, and capable of *delight*; would express its *gratitude*, in all these demonstrations of the most lively and exuberant joy.

sacred historian hath left it upon record; that, at the first exhibition of this ravishing scene, there was with the angel, who brought the blessed tidings, a multitude of the heavenly host; praising GOD, and making the concave of the skies resound with their hallelujahs. At the dawn of the Sun of righteousness, when he was beginning to rise with healing in his wings, the *morning-stars* sang together, and all the *sons of GOD* shouted for joy.—And shall *man*, whom this gracious dispensation principally respects; shall *man*, who is the centre of all these gladdening rays; shall he have no *heart* to adore, no *anthem* to celebrate, This

Love without end, and without measure grace?

MILT.

How *clear* is the face of the sky, and how perfectly *pure*! Clearer than the limpid stream, more pure than the polished crystal. That *stately* *cieling*; fretted with gold, and stretched to an extent of many millions of leagues; is not disfigured with a *single* *flaw*. That *azure* *mantle*; embroidered with stars, and spacious enough to form a covering for unnumbered worlds; is without the least *spot* or *wrinkle*.——

Yet, this can scarce yield us, so much as a faint representation of the *divine* *purity*. GOD is a GOD of the most immaculate excellence. His ways are uprightness itself: his councils and words, the very sanctity of wisdom, and of truth. The *laws*, which he has given to *universal* *nature*; are exquisitely contrived, and beyond all possibility of improvement. The *precepts*, which he has appointed for the *human* *race*; are a complete summary, of all that is honourable in itself, and perfective of the rational mind.—Not the least *oversight*, in planning a series of events for all futurity; nor the least *mal-administration*, in managing the affairs of every age, since time began; of every nation, under the whole heaven.—Pardon these disparaging expressions. A *negative* *perfection* is far, far beneath

thy

thy dignity, *O thou most Highest* *. In all these instances; in all thy acts, and all thy attributes; thou art not only holy, but "*glorious in holiness*."

So inconceivably holy is the LORD GOD of hosts, that he sees *defilement* even in the *brightness* of yonder firmament. Those living sapphires, before his majesty, lose their lustre. *He looketh even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, who, in his fallen and depraved state, is little better than a worm, that crawls in the corrupted carcase; and the son of man, who, by reason of his manifold actual impurities, is too justly compared to an insect, that wallows amidst stench and putrefaction †? — Is there not then abundant cause, for*

* *O thou most Highest*. — This expression occurs more than once, in the Psalms used by the established church. And is, I think, one of those beauties; which, because often exhibited, generally escape our notice. It is a *superlative* formed on a superlative; and, though not strictly conformable to *grammatical rules*, is nobly superior to them all. — The *language* seems to be sensible of its own deficiency; when the incomprehensible JEHOVAH is addressed, or celebrated. Oppressed, as it were, with the glories of the subject, it labours after a *more emphatical* manner of diction, than the *ordinary forms* of speech afford. — It is, if I rightly judge, one of those daring and happy peculiarities of a masterly genius, which Mr Pope so finely describes; and, while he describes, exemplifies;

Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true critics dare not mend;
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.

Essay on Criticism.

St Paul's — *εὐχαριστέω πάντων τὸν ἄγιον* — is a beautiful passage of the like nature; which our translators have very properly rendered, *less than the least of all saints*. — His — *πολλὰ μᾶλλον χριστῶν* — is another instance of the same kind. But here, the *English* version fails. *Far better* — is extremely *flat*, compared with the *nervous* original. And I greatly question, whether it is possible to translate the sentence with equal conciseness, and equal spirit. See Eph. iii. 8. Phil. i. 23.

† Job xxv. 5. 6. I submit it to the judgment of the learned, whether this is not the true meaning of the text. — It may not be able, perhaps, to recommend itself, to the *squeamishly nice* critic; or to those, who are always extolling the *supposed* dignity of the human nature.

for the most irreproachable and eminent of mankind, to renounce all *arrogant pretensions*; to lay aside every assuming air; to take nothing but *shame* and confusion to *themselves*? A holy sufferer, and holy prophet, felt such humbling impressions, from a glimpse of the uncreated purity. *I abhor myself in dust and ashes* *, was the declaration of the one: *I am a man of unclean lips* †, the confession of the other.—And should not this teach us all, to adore the divine mercies, for that precious *purifying fountain* ‡; which was foretold from the foundations of the world, but was opened at that awful juncture, when knotty *whips* tore the flesh; when ragged *thorns* mangled the temples; when sharpened *nails* cut fresh sluices for the crimson current; when the gash of the *spear* completed the dreadful work, and *forthwith flowed there*, from the wounded heart, *blood and water*.

Especially since the GOD, in whose sight the *very heavens* are *not unsullied*; though so curiously fine, and “spread out like a molten looking-glass;”—since

nature. But it seems, in preference to every other interpretation, suitable to the sacred context; and is far, far from being *injurious* to the character of that apostate race, which is “altogether become a—bominable,” and “is as an unclean thing.”—On this supposition, there is not only an *apparent*, but a very *striking* contrast, between the purity of GOD, and the pollution of man: the *purity* of the most high GOD, which outshines the moon, and eclipses the stars; the *pollution* of degenerate man, which, exclusive of a Saviour, would render him as loathsome to the all-seeing Eye, as the vilest vermin are in ours.—Without assigning this sense to the passage, I cannot discern the force of the *antithesis*, or indeed the propriety of the sentiment. Worms, in the general, give us an idea of *meanness* and *infirmity*; not of *defilement* and *impurity*; unless they are insects of such a particular kind, and considered in some noisome circumstances.—The two words of the original—*חולע* and *חול*—are evidently used in this signification by *Moses* and *Isaiah*; by the one, to denote the vermin, that devoured the *putrefied manna*; by the other, to express the reptiles, which swarm in the *body* that feels *corruption*. Exod. xvi. 20. 16. xiv. 11.

* Job xlii. 6.

† 16. vi. 5.

‡ In that day there shall be a fountain opened, to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1.

this

this God saw *no blemish* in his dear Son. His all-penetrating and jealous eye, discerned nothing amiss, nothing defective, in our glorious Redeemer. Nothing amiss? Yea, he bore this most illustrious testimony, concerning his holy child Jesus: "In him I am *pleased*: I am *well pleased*; I acquiesce, with entire complacency, and the *highest delight*, in his person, his undertaking, and the whole execution of his office."—How should this thought, *enliven* our hopes; while the other, *mortifies* our pride? Ought not our hearts, to spring within us, and even leap for joy; from the repeated assurances given us by revelation, that such a divinely excellent Being, is our Mediator? What apparent reason has every believer, to adopt the blessed virgin's exclamation? "*My soul doth magnify the LORD* for this transcendent mercy; and *my spirit rejoices*, not in wide-extended harvests, waving over my fertile glebe*; not in armies vanquished, and leaving the peculiar treasure of nations for my spoil*; but in an infinitely richer, nobler blessing, even in *GOD my Saviour*."—That a person so sublime and perfect, has vouchsafed to become my *Surety*: to give himself for my *ransom*, in the world below; and act as my *Advocate* in the Royal Presence above: yea, to make *my* recovery, the reward of *his* sufferings; *my* final felicity, the honour of *his* mediatorial kingdom!

WHEN an innumerable multitude † of bodies, many of them more than a *hundred thousand miles* in diameter ‡, are all set in *motion*:—when the *orbits*, in which

* * The inspired penman, from these two occasions of distinguished joy, sets forth the incomparably *greater delight* which arises from the gift of a Saviour, and the blessing of redemption. 1s. ix. vers. 3. compared with vers. 6.

† This refers, not only to the planets which pass and repass about our sun, but also to the other planetary worlds, which are supposed to attend the several fixed stars.

‡ The diameter of *Jupiter* is calculated at 130,653 miles, while his orbit is reckoned to consist of 895,134,000. Which computation,

which they perform their periodical revolutions, are extended at the rate of several hundreds of *millions*;—when each has a *distinct* and separate *sphere*, for finishing his vast circuits:—when none knows, what it is to be *cramped*; but most *freely expatiates*, in his unbounded career:—when every one is placed, at such an *immense remove* from each other; that they appear to their respective inhabitants, only as so many *spots of light*:—O! how astonishing must be the *expanse*, which yields *room* for all those mighty globes, and their widely diffused operations! To what prodigious lengths did the Almighty Builder stretch his line, when he marked out the stupendous platform! I wonder at such an immeasurable extent. My very thoughts are lost, in this *abyss* of space. But, be it known to mortals; be it never forgot by sinners; that, in all its most *surprising amplitude*, it is *small*, it is *scanty*, compared with the bounty and the mercy of its Maker.

His *bounty* is absolutely without limits*, and without end. The most lavish generosity cannot *exhaust*, or even *diminish* his munificence. O! all ye tribes of men; or rather, all ye classes of intelligent creatures; ye are not straitened in the *liberality* of your ever-blessed Creator; be not straitened in your own *expectations*. “Open your mouth wide, and he shall fill it” with copious and continual draughts from the cup of joy. Your God, on whom is your whole

tion, according to the maxims of astronomy, and the laws of proportion, may, as is taken for granted in the Contemplations, be applied to *other planets* revolving round *other suns*.

* By *bounty* I mean, not the actual *exercise*, or the *effects*, of this excellency in the Deity. These *are*, and always *must be*, through the immense perfection of the attribute, and the necessary scantiness of the recipient, bounded. But I would be understood, as speaking of the divine *power*, and the divine *will*, to exert divine beneficence. These can have no real, no imaginable limits. These, after a communication of blessings, distributed to unnumbered worlds, continued through unnumbered ages, *must still* have more to bestow, *for ever* have more to bestow; *infinitely* more to bestow, than it is possible for creation itself to receive.

dependence,

dependence, is more than able; is more than willing; to "supply all your need, according to his riches in glory."—When the LORD JEHOVAH is the giver, and his grace * the gift; let your wishes be unbounded, and your cravings insatiable. *All* that created beings can possibly *covet*, is but a very small *pittance* of that unknown happiness, which the everlasting Benefactor is ready to *bestow*. Form not your estimate of the *supreme beneficence*, from those narrow models of *mortal kindness*; which either your own experience has observed, or the history of ages has recorded. Suppose every charitable disposition, which warms the hearts of the human race, added to those more enlarged affections, which glow in heavenly bosoms; what were they all, even in their highest exercise, compared with the benignity of the divine nature?—Bless *me* then, thou eternal Source of love; bless *all* that reverence thy holy name; according to thy own most profuse goodness: whose great prerogative it is, to disdain all measure. O! bless us, in proportion to that grace; the richness of which (unutterable by the tongues of men, and of angels) was once *spoke* in the *groans*, and *written* in the *wounds*, of thy expiring Son.

AND as for the *mercy* of God, it is "greater than the heavens;" more extensive than the dimensions of the sky. Charming thought! transporting reflection! let me indulge thee once more †. Let me think
over

* 1 Cor. ix. 8. GOD is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. How beautiful and emphatical is this description! inferior to nothing, but that extent of ability, and those riches of liberality, which it so eloquently celebrates. Does it not *exhaust* all the powers of language; while it attempts to give us a specimen, of the *munificence* of the LORD?

† This refers to p. 93. of *Reflections on a Flower-Garden*.—The following pages, to the 156th, exhibit a *digressive* view of the divine mercy. I thought it proper to apprise my reader of this excursion: though, I hope, it will be needless to offer an apology for dwelling so long upon this delightful theme. Who can complain of
tediousness,

over the noble displays of this lovely attribute; and, while I admire the *trophies* of *forgiving goodness*, add one to the number. — With what amiable and affecting colours, is this represented in the *parable* of the *prodigal*! What could induce that foolish youth, to forsake his gracious father? Had he not been tenderly cherished, by the good parent; and loaded with benefits, from his indulgent hand? were not the *restraints* of paternal government, an *easy yoke*? or rather, a *preservative* from ruin? Notwithstanding every endearing obligation, he revolts from his duty: and launches out into such scandalous irregularities, as were a dishonour to his family, and destructive to himself.

—— But, when afflictions brought him to a sense of his folly, and sharp necessity drove him to a submissive return; did the *injured father* discover the least *resentment* of mind? Quite the reverse. He *espied* him, while he was yet a *great way off*; and, the moment he beheld the profligate creature, “his bowels sounded like an harp,” touched with notes divinely soft. He never once thinks of the riotous living, and infamous course of debaucheries. Pity, parental pity, passes an act of oblivion; and, in one instant, cancels a series of long-continued provocations. — So strong are the yearnings of fatherly affection; that he even *runs*, to receive the naked and destitute wretch, to his arms. And is there a single frown in his brow, or one upbraiding word on his tongue? — Instead of *reproaching* him for his odious excesses; he *falls* on his *neck*, and snatches him to his eager embraces. Instead of rejecting him with indignation, for his undutiful extravagance; he kisses him with tears of delight: and rejoices, at his return from folly; as he formerly rejoiced, on the day of his nativity. — When this

tediousness, while I speak *consolation* to distressed, and *recovery* to ruined creatures? The divine mercy is the sole fountain of all our present and future blessings. In proportion to this benign attribute, human hopes arise, and human felicity flows. Who, therefore, can be weary of *viewing* and *reviewing*; when the *lengths* and *breadths* of forgiving grace, are the ravishing prospect?

companion

companion of harlots opens his mouth, *before he speaks, the father hears*. He interrupts him, in the midst of his intended speech. The overflowings of his compassionate heart can brook no delay. He seems to be *uneasy himself*, till he has made the afflicted penitent glad, with the assurance of his acceptance, and the choicest of his favours. While the poor abashed offender seeks nothing more, than not to be abhorred; he is thoroughly reconciled. While he requests no other indulgence, than only to be treated as the *meanest servant*; he is caressed, and honoured, as the *dearest of children*.—Was there ever so bright and winning a picture, of the tenderest mercy; most freely vouchsafed, to the most unworthy of creatures? Yet *thus*, my soul; and *thus*, my fellow-sinner; will the LORD GOD of everlasting compassions receive us; if, with a contrite spirit, and lively faith, we turn to him through JESUS CHRIST.

Where sin has abounded, says the proclamation from the court of Heaven, grace doth much more abound.—By this *Manasseh*, a monster of barbarity, and an adept in iniquity, becomes a child of forgiving love, and an heir of immortal glory.—Behold that bitter and bloody persecutor *Saul*, when breathing out threatenings*, and bent upon slaughter, he worried the lambs, and

* Acts ix. 1. Σαυλος ἔτι ἐμπνεων ἀπειλῆς καὶ φόβου, *Saul yet breathing out threatening and slaughter.*—What a representation is here of a mind, mad with rage, and abandoned to the fiercest extremes of barbarity! I scarce know, whether I am more shocked at the persecutor's *savage disposition*, or charmed with the evangelist's *lively description*.—The adverb—*ἔτι*—seems to refer to chap. viii. vers. 3. and has, in this connection, a peculiar force. The havoc he had committed, the inoffensive families he had already ruined, were not sufficient to assuage his vengeful spirit. They were only a *taste*; which, instead of *glutting* the blood-hound, made him more closely pursue the track, and more *eagerly* pant for destruction.—He is *still* athirst for violence and murder. So restless and insatiable is his thirst, that he even *breathes out* threatening and slaughter. His words are spears and arrows, and his tongue a sharp sword. It is as natural for him to menace the Christians, as to breathe the air.—Nay, they *bleed*, every hour, every moment, in the purposes of his rancorous heart. It is only owing to want of power, that every syllable he utters, e-
very

and put to death the disciples of the blessed JESUS.

Who, upon the principles of human judgment, would not have pronounced him a vessel of wrath, destined to unavoidable damnation? Nay, would not have been ready to conclude; that, if there were heavier chains, and a deeper dungeon, in the world of woe; they must surely be reserved for such an implacable enemy of true godliness? Yet (admire and adore the riches of almighty grace!) this *Saul*, is elected into the goodly fellowship of the prophets; is numbered with the noble army of martyrs; and makes a distinguished figure, among the glorious company of the apostles.—The *Corinthians* were flagitious, even to a proverb. Some of them wallowed in such abominable vices, and habituated themselves to such outrageous acts of injustice, as were a reproach to human nature. Yet even these sons of violence, and slaves of sensuality, “were washed; were sanctified; were justified*.” *Washed*, in the precious blood of a dying Redeemer; *sanctified*, by the powerful operations of the blessed Spirit; *justified*, through the infinitely tender mercies of a gracious God. And those who were once the burden of the earth, are now the joy of heaven, and the delight of angels.

There is another instance in scripture, which most loudly publishes that sweetest of the divine names, “THE LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.” An instance this, which exceeds all the former; which exceeds whatever can be imagined; which if I was to forget, the very stones might cry out, and sound it in my ears. I mean the case of those sinners, who murdered the *Prince of peace*, and LORD of glory. These men could scarce have the shadow of an excuse for their crime; hardly a circumstance to extenuate their guilt. They were very breath he draws, does not deal about deaths, and cause some of the innocent disciples to fall.

* 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. 11.

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well acquainted with his exemplary conversation; they had often heard his heavenly doctrines; they were almost daily spectators of his unequalled miracles. They therefore had all possible reason to honour him, as the most *illustrious* of beings; and to receive him—into their houses—their arms—their very hearts—as the most inestimable of blessings. Yet, notwithstanding all these engaging motives to love him, even above their own lives; they seize his person; asperse his character; drag him before a Heathen tribunal; and extort a sentence of death, against innocence and holiness itself. Never was the *vilest slave*, so contumeliously abused; nor the most *execrable malefactor*, so barbarously executed. The sun was confounded at the shocking scene; and one cannot but wonder, how the avenging lightnings could withhold their flashes. The earth trembled at the horrid deed; and why, why did it not cleave asunder, and open a passage for such blood-thirsty miscreants, into the nethermost hell? Shall *these* ever hope to obtain *forgiveness*, from the righteous Judge? Shall not *these* be consigned over to *inexorable* wrath, and the *severest* torments?—O the miraculous effects of divine grace! O the triumphant goodness of God our Saviour! Many, even of these impious wretches, at the descent of the Holy Ghost, were convinced of their enormous sin; were wounded with penitential remorse; fled to the sanctuary of the cross, and laid hold on the horns of that altar; had their pardon ratified by the baptismal seal; and, continuing in the apostle's doctrine, were made partakers of the kingdom of heaven: where they now shine, as so many everlasting *monuments* of most distinguished *mercy*; and receive beatitude past utterance, from that very Redeemer, whom once “with wicked hands they crucified and slew.”—Well might the prophet cry out, with a pleasing amazement, “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by transgression *?”—Let all flesh

* Mic. vii. 18.

remember;

remember; let all flesh rejoice; that with the LORD there is *such* mercy, and with his CHRIST *such* plentiful redemption.

WHAT a grand and majestic *dome* is the sky! And where are the *pillars* that support the stately concave? What art, most exactly true, balanced the pressure; and what props of insuperable strength sustain the weight? How is that immeasurable arch *upheld*, unshaken, and unimpaired; while so many generations of busy mortals, have *sunk* and disappeared, as bubbles upon the stream?——If those stars are of such an amazing bulk; how are they all *fastened*, in their lofty situation? By what miracle in mechanics, are so many thousands of ponderous orbs, kept from falling upon our heads; kept from dashing both the world to pieces, and its inhabitants to death? Are they hung in golden, or adamantine, *chains*? Rest they their enormous load on *rocks* of marble, or *columns* of brass? No; they are *pendulous* in fluid æther: and yet are more immoveably *fixed* than if the everlasting mountains lent their ridges for a basis. The almighty Architect *stretches out the north*, and its whole starry train, *over the empty place*. He *hangs the earth*, and all the ethereal globes, *upon nothing* *. Yet are their foundations laid so sure, that they can “never be moved at any time.”

No unfit representation, to the *sincere* Christian, of his *final* perseverance †: but such, as points out the cause

* Job xxvi. 7.

† With regard to the *final perseverance* of the true believer; I am sensible, that this point is not a little controverted.——The sentiments which follow are my stedfast belief. It is by no means proper, in a work of this nature, to enter upon a discussion of the subject, neither have I room, so much as to hint what might be urged for its support——Let my reader observe, that I am far from delivering it, as essential to Christianity, or necessary to salvation. Millions, of the very contrary conviction, are, I doubt not, high in the favour of GOD; and in a growing meetness for his heavenly kingdom. As I blame none for *rejecting*, none, I hope, will be offended with me for *espousing*, this particular doctrine.—To be of different opinions, at least in some inferior instances, seems an unavoidable consequence

cause, which effects it; and constitutes the pledge, which ascertains it.—His nature is all enfeebled. He is not able, of himself, to think a good thought. He has no *visible safeguard*, nor any *sufficiency* of his own. And yet, whole legions of formidable enemies are combined to compass his ruin. The *world* lays unnumbered snares for his feet: the *devil* is incessantly urging the siege, by a multitude of fiery darts, or wily temptations: the *flesh*, like a perfidious inmate, under colour of friendship, and a specious pretence of pleasure, is always forward to betray his integrity.

sequence of our present state: where *ignorance*, in part, cleaves to the *wisest* minds: and *prejudice* easily besets the most *impartial* judgments. It may also turn to our common advantage; and afford opportunity for exercising the *healing* virtues of moderation, meekness, and forbearance.—Let me only be permitted to ask, Whether this tenet does not evidently tend, to establish the *comfort* of the Christian; to magnify the *fidelity* of God our Saviour; and whether, far from countenancing sloth, or encouraging remissness, to *know* that our labour shall not be in vain, is not the most prevailing inducement to *abound* in the work of the Lord? 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Is any one inclined to examine the reasons which have made the author a proselyte to this persuasion? He may find them displayed in the celebrated paper, delivered by the most eminent divines of the church of England, at the ever-memorable synod of Dordt.—

(See *Acta Synod. Dordrac.* part 2. page 403. of the *Latin* edition, published in a single quarto volume).—Those who have no opportunity of consulting the memoirs of that venerable assembly, I would refer to the works of the indefatigable and very learned Turretin, or to those of the candid and elegant Witsius.—Turretin tom II. q. xvi. Wits. *Oron* lib III. cap. xiii.

The latest and fullest view of the point, which I ever remember to have met with in any of our *English* writers, is in the *Lime-street lectures*; which are a defence of several most important doctrines of the gospel, and contained in two octavo volumes; the united labours of nine modern divines; most of whom are well known to the world, by their other evangelical and useful writings. In those lectures, the final perseverance of the saints is very particularly stated, and, to my apprehension at least, most satisfactorily proved; the arguments usually urged against it, impartially-considered, and I cannot but think (with all due deference to the judgment of others) unanswerably confuted.

And here (not to swell this note any further) I shall only just hint, that the judicious Hooker (an authority, perhaps, as weighty and unexceptionable as any that can well be produced), gives a *solemn attestation* to this tenet, in a short discourse on the perpetuity of faith, subjoined to his *Ecclesiastical Polity*. Folio edition.

—But amidst all these threatening circumstances, of personal weakness, and imminent danger, an *invisible aid* is his defence. “*I will uphold thee,*” says the blessed God, “*with the right hand of my righteousness **.” O comfortable truth ! The arm which fixes the stars in their orders, and guides the planets in their course, is stretched out to preserve the heirs of salvation.—“*My sheep,*” adds the great Redeemer, “*are mine; and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand †.*” What words are these ! And did they come from HIM, who hath all power in heaven and on earth ? And were they spoke to every unfeigned, though feeble follower of the great Shepherd ? Then, *Omnipotence* itself must be *vanquished*; before *they* can be *destroyed*, either by the seductions of fraud, or the assaults of violence.

If you ask therefore, *What security* we have of enduring to the end, and continuing faithful unto death ? —The very *same* that establishes the heavens, and settles the ordinances of the universe. Can *these* be thrown into confusion † ? Then, may the *true believer* draw back unto perdition. Can the sun be dislodged from its sphere, and rush lawlessly through the sky ? Then, and then only, can the faith of God’s elect || be finally overthrown.—Be of good courage then, my soul ; rely on those divine succours, which are so *solemnly stipulated, so faithfully promised*. Though thy *grace* be languid as the glimmering *spark* ; though the *overflowings* of *corruption* threaten it with total extinction ; yet, since the great JEHOVAH has undertaken to cherish the dim principle, “*many waters cannot quench it, nor all the floods drown it.*” Nay, though it were feeble as the *smoking flax* §, almighty goodness

* If. xli. 10.

† John x. 28.

‡ Jer. xxxi. 35. 36.

|| Tit. i. 2.

§ The *tenderness* and *faithfulness* of God to his people, are finely pictured by the prophet *Isaiah*, chap. xlii. vers. 3. Which passage, because of its rich consolation, and uncommon beauty, is deservedly adopted by St *Matthew*, and ingrafted into the system of evangelical truths.—*He will not himself break, nor suffer to be broken by any*

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goodness stands engaged, to augment the heat, to raise the fire, and feed the flame; till it beam forth a *lamp* of immortal *glory*, in the heavens.

AND, as to the *faithfulness* of a covenantee God; this may be emblematically seen, in the stability of the heavenly *bodies*, and the *perpetuity* of their *motions* *.
—Those that are *fixed*, continue unalterably in their stations. No injurious shocks; no violence of conflicting elements are able to displace those *everlasting hinges*, on which dependent worlds revolve. Through the whole flight of time, they recede not, so much as a hair's-breadth, from the precise central point of their respective systems.—While the *erratic* perform their prodigious stages, without any intermission, or the least embarrassment. How soon, and how easily, is the most finished piece of *human machinery* disconcerted! But all the *celestial movements*, are so nicely adjusted; all their operations, so critically proportioned; and their mutual dependencies, so strongly connected; that they prolong their beneficial courses throughout all ages. While *mighty cities* are overwhelmed with ruin, and their very names lost in oblivion: while *vast empires* are swept from their foundations, and leave not so much as a shadowy trace of their ancient magnificence; while *all terrestrial things* are subject to vicissitude, and fluctuating in uncertainty: *these* are permanent in their duration;

any other, *the bruised reed*; nor *quench the smoking flax*. Was it possible, to have chosen two more delicate, and expressive representations? Could any image be more significant, of a very infirm and enfeebled *faith*; than the *flexile reed*, that bends before every wind; which besides its natural weakness, is made abundantly weaker by being *bruised*: and so, ready to fall in pieces of itself?—Nor could any thing with a more pathetic exactness, describe the extreme imbecillity, of that other principle of the divine life, *love*; than the state of the *flax*, which is but just beginning to burn; and consequently, liable to be put out by the least blast: or rather of the *wick* of the lamp, when it is not kindled into so much as a glimmering flame, but only *breathing smoke*, and uncertain whether it shall take-fire or no. Matth. xii. 20.

* Psal. cxix. 86. 90.

invariable in their functions; "not one faileth."—Who doubts the *constant succession* of day and night; or the *regular returns* of Summer and Winter? And why, O! why shall we doubt the *veracity* of God, or distrust the *accomplishment* of his holy word? Can the ordinances of heaven depart? Then only can God forget to be gracious; or neglect the performance of his promise.—Nay, our Lord gives us *yet firmer ground* of affiance. He affords us a surer bottom for our faith, than the *fundamental laws* of the universe. "Heaven and earth," he says, "may pass away; but not one *jot* or *tittle* of his word shall fall short of its purpose." His sacred word, whatever may obstruct it, whoever may oppose it, shall be fulfilled to the very uttermost.

O *powerful word*! How astonishing is its efficacy! When this word was issued forth, a *thousand worlds* emerged out of nothing. And, should the mighty orders be repeated, a *thousand more* would spring into existence. By this word the vast system of created things is *upheld* in immutable *constancy*; but should it give command, or cease to exert its energy, the universal frame would be dissolved, and all nature revert to her original chaos. And this very word is *pledged* for the safety, the comfort, the happiness of *the godly*. This inviolable, this almighty word, *speaks* in all the *promises* of the gospel.—How strangely infatuated are our souls, that we should value it so little! What infidels are we in fact, that we should depend upon it no more! Did it *create* whatever has a being; and shall it not *work* faith in our breasts? Do unnumbered worlds owe their support to this word; and shall it not be sufficient to *buoy* up our souls in troubles, or establish them in trials? Is it the *life* of the universe, and shall it be a *dead letter* to mankind?

If I wish to be heard, when I implore heavenly blessings; is not *this privilege* most clearly *made over* to my enjoyment, in that well known text, "Ask," "and it shall be given you *?"—If I long for the eter-

* Matth. vii. 7.

nal Comforter to dwell in my heart, and sanctify my nature; have I not an *apparent title* to this *high prerogative*, conferred in that sweet assertive interrogation, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to those that ask him *?"—If I earnestly covet the inestimable treasures, that are comprised in the great IMMANUEL's mediation; can I have a *firmer claim* to the *noble portion*, that is granted in that most precious scripture, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out †?"—What assurance, of being interested in these unspeakable mercies, would I desire? What *form of conveyance*; what *deed of settlement*; were it left to my own option, should I choose? Here is the word of a King; the King immortal and invisible; all whose declarations ‡ are truth itself.——If a monarch *bestow immunities* on a body of men, and *confirm* them by an authentic *charter*; no one controverts, no one questions, their right to the royal favours. And why should we suspect the *validity* of those glorious *grants*, which are made by the everlasting Sovereign of nature; which he has also *ratified* by an oath, and *sealed* with the blood of his Son?—Corporations may be disfranchised, and charters revoked. Even mountains may be removed, and stars drop from their spheres. But a tenure *founded* on the divine promise, is *unalienably secure*; is *lasting* as eternity itself.

WE have endeavoured to spell out a *syllable* of the eternal Name, in the wonders of the sky. We have caught a *glimpse* of the Almighty's *glory*, from the lustre of innumerable stars. But would we behold all his excellencies pourtrayed in *full perfection*, and drawn to the *very life*, let us attentively consider the REDEEMER.——I observe, there are some parts of

* Luke xi. 13. † John vi. 37.

‡ ————If these fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble.——

Milt. Comus.

the firmament, in which the *stars* seem, as it were, to cluster. They are sown thicker, and they lie closer than usual, and strike the eye with redoubled splendor. Like the jewels on a crown, they mingle their beams, and reflect a reciprocal increase of brilliancy on each other.—And is there not such an assemblage, such a constellation of the *divine honours*, most amiably effulgent in the blessed JESUS?

Does not infinite *wisdom* * shine, with surpassing brightness, in CHRIST? To the making of a world, there was no obstacle; but to the saving of man, there seemed to be unsurmountable bars. If the rebel is suffered to escape; where is the *inflexible justice*, which denounces “death as the wages of sin?” If the offender is thoroughly pardoned; where is the *inviolable veracity*, which has solemnly declared, “The soul that sinneth shall die?” These awful attributes are set in terrible array; and, like an impetrable battalion, oppose the salvation of apostate mankind. Who can suggest a method, to *absolve* the traitorous race, and yet *vindicate* the honours of almighty sovereignty? This is an intricacy, which the most exalted of finite intelligences are unable to clear.—But, behold the *unsearchable secret* revealed! revealed in the wonderful redemption, accomplished by a dying Saviour! So *plainly revealed*, that “he who runs, may read;” and even *babes* understand, what minds of the deepest penetration could not contrive.—The Son of God, taking our nature, obeys the law, and undergoes death in our stead. By this means, the threatened *curse* is executed, in all its *rigour*; and free *grace* is exercised, in all its *riches*. Justice maintains its *rights*, and, with a steady hand, administers impartial vengeance; while mercy *disfenses* her *pardons*, and welcomes the repentant criminal into its tenderest embraces. Hereby the seemingly thwarting attributes are reconciled; and the sinner is saved, not only in *full consistence*, with the honour

* See the next note.

of the supreme perfections; but to the most *illustrious* manifestation of them all.

Where does the divine power * so signally exert itself, as in the *cross* of CHRIST, and in the *conquests* of grace? —Our LORD, in his lowest state of humiliation, gained a more glorious victory; than when, through the dividing sea, and the waste-howling wilderness, he “rode upon his chariots and horses of salvation.” When his hands were *riveted*, with irons, to the bloody tree; he *disarmed* death of its sting, and *plucked* the prey from the jaws of hell. Then, even then, while he was crucified in *weakness*, he vanquished the *strong man*, and subdued our most formidable enemies: even then, he spoiled principalities; triumphed over the powers of darkness; and led captivity captive.—And now he is exalted to his heavenly throne, with what a prevailing efficacy does his grace go forth, “conquering, and to conquer!”—By this, the *slaves* of sin are rescued from their bondage, and restored to the *liberty* of *righteousness*. By this, depraved wretches, whose appetites were *sensual*, and their dispositions *devilish*, are not only renewed, but renewed after the image of GOD, and made partakers of a *divine nature*. Millions, millions of lost creatures, are snatched, by the interposition of grace, like *brands* from the burning; and translated into everlasting mansions, shine brighter than the *stars*, shine bright as the *sun*, in the kingdom of their Father.

Would you see a more complete display of the divine purity, than the unspotted firmament; the spangles of heaven; or the golden fountain of day? Contemplate the same sacred Being. He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. In his immaculate nature; in his heavenly tem-

* CHRIST, the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD, 1 Cor. i. 24.—To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church (by the amazing contrivance, circumstances, and accomplishment of its redemption) the deep, extensive, and (πολυποικίλος) greatly diversified wisdom of GOD, Eph. iii. 10.

fused into thy breast, the other transcribed in thy life.—Follow him to the *last scene* of the most innocent and useful course, that was ever passed on earth. Follow him to *Calvary's* horrid eminence; to *Calvary's* fatal catastrophe. Be thy most constant attention fixed, on that lovely and sorrowful spectacle. Behold the spotless victim, nailed to the tree, and stabbed to the heart. Hear him pouring out *prayers*, for his *murderers*; before he poured out his *soul*, for *transgressors*. See the wounds, that stream with forgiveness, and *bleed balm* for a distempered world. O! see the justice of the Almighty, and his goodness; his mercy, and his vengeance; all his *tremendous*, and *gracious* attributes manifested: manifested with inexpressible splendor, in that most *ignominious*, and yet *grandest* of transactions.

SINCE GOD is so inconceivably great, as these his marvellous works declare;

*Since the great Sov'reign sends ten thousand worlds,
To tell us, he resides above them all,
In glory's unapproachable recess *;*

What an *honourable*, as well as advantageous employ, is *prayer*! By prayer we have *access* to that most mighty *Potentate*; whose sceptre sways universal nature, and whose rich regalia fills the skies with lustre. Prayer places us in the presence-chamber; while “the blood of sprinkling,” procures us a gracious au-

* For this quotation, and several valuable hints, I acknowledge myself indebted to those beautiful and sublime poems, intitled *Night-Thoughts*.—Of which I shall only say, That I receive fresh pleasure, and richer improvement, from every renewed perusal. And, I think, I shall have reason to bless the indulgent Bestower of all wisdom, for those instructive and animating compositions, even in my last moments. Than which nothing can more emphatically speak their very *superior excellence*, nor give a more *solid satisfaction* to their worthy author.—Happy should I think myself, if these little sketches of contemplative devotion, might be honoured with the *most inferior* degree of the same success; and receive a testimony, not from the voice of fame, but from the dying lips of some edified Christian.

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dience.— Shall I then *blush* to be found prostrate, before the throne of grace? Shall I be *ashamed* to have it known; that I offer up social supplications in the family, or am conscientious in observing my private retirements? Rather, let me *glory* in this unspeakable privilege. Let me reckon it the *noblest* posture, to fall low on my *knees* before his footstool; and the highest honour, to enjoy communion with his most exalted Majesty.—Incomparably more noble, than to *sit*, in *person*, on the triumphal chariot; or to *stand* in *effigy*, amidst the temple of worthies.

How inestimable, in such a view, is that promise, which so often occurs in the prophetic writings, and is the crowning benefit of the new covenant, *I will be thy GOD* *?— Will this supremely excellent, and almighty Being, vouchsafe to be my portion? To settle upon a poor sinner, not the heritage of a *county*; not the possession of the whole *earth*; but his *own* ever-blessed *Self*? May I then, through his free condescending grace, and the unknown merits of his Son, look upon all these infinitely noble attributes as my treasure? May I regard the *wisdom*, which superintends such a multitude of worlds, as my *guide*; the *power*, which produced, and preserves them in existence, as my *guard*; the *goodness*, which, by an endless communication of favours, renders them all so many habitations of happiness, as my *exceeding great reward*?— What a fund of felicity, is included in such a blessing? How often does the *Israelitish* prince exult in the assurance, that this unutterable and boundless good is his own? Interested in this, he bids defiance to every evil that can be dreaded; and rests in certain expectation of every blessing that can be desired. The *LORD* is my *light*, and my *salvation*; *whom then shall I fear*? The *LORD*, with an air of exultation, he repeats both his *affiance*, and his challenge, *is the strength of my life*; *of whom then shall I be afraid* †? Nothing so effectual, as this ap-

* Heb. viii. 10.

† Psal. xxvii. 1.

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propriating faith, to inspire a *dignity of mind*, superior to transitory trifles; or to create a *calmness of temper*, unalarmed by vulgar fears, unappalled by death itself.—*The LORD is my shepherd*, says the same truly gallant and heroic personage: *therefore shall I lack nothing* *. How is it possible, he should suffer want, who has the all sufficient fulness for his supply? So long as unerring wisdom is capable of contriving the means, and irresistible power is able to execute them, such a one cannot fail, of being safe and happy; whether he continue amidst the vicissitudes of time, or depart into the unchangeable eternity.

HERE, let us stand a moment, and contemplate this great GOD, together with *ourselves*, in a relative view.—If we reflect on the works of *material nature*, their number incomprehensible, and their extent unmeasurable: each of them apart, so admirably framed; the connections of the whole, so exquisitely regulated; and all derived, from one and the same glorious Agent.—If we recollect the far more noble accomplishments of elegant taste, and discerning judgment; of refined passions, and exalted sentiments; which are to be found, among the several orders of *understanding* beings; and all of them flowing, in rich emanations, from the one sole Fountain of intellectual light.—If we farther consider this Author of material beauty, and moral excellency, as a *guardian*, a *governor*, and *benefactor* to all his creatures: supporting their being, and protecting their persons, by an ever-watchful providence; presiding over their affairs, and causing all events to terminate in the most extensive good; heaping, with unremitted liberality, his benefits upon every capable object, and making the whole circle of existence a seminary of happiness.—Is it possible for the human heart, under such captivating views, to be *indifferent* towards

* Psal. xxiii. 1.

this ever-blessed Original of all good? Can any be so immersed in stupidity, as to say unto the Almighty—in the language of an irreligious temper, and licentious life, to say, “Depart from us, we implore not thy favour; nor desire the knowledge of thy ways?”—Wonder, *O heavens!* be amazed, *O earth!* and let all the inhabitants of *both* join their astonishment, at this unparallelled complication of disingenuous, ungrateful, and destructive perverseness!

If we consider our *own imperfect* state; frail in our bodies; enfeebled in our minds; in every part of our constitution, and in all the occurrences of life, “like a tottering wall, or a broken hedge.”—If we survey our *indigent* state; without holiness; without happiness; our possession of present conveniencies, entirely dependent on God’s sovereign pleasure; yea, forfeited, justly forfeited, and every future hope, by a thousand aggravated iniquities.—If we add the various *disasters* of our condition; agitated by tumultuous passions; oppressed with dispiriting fears; held in suspense by a variety of perplexing * cares; liable to pains, and exposed to troubles; troubles, from every quarter; troubles, of every kind:—can we, amidst so many wants, under such deplorable infirmities, and subject to such disastrous accidents,—can we be unconcerned, whether God’s omnipotent hand,

* All that are conversant with the original language of the New Testament, are sufficiently apprised, that *this* is the *significancy* of that important dissuasive, urged by our LORD, *μη μεριμνάτε*, Matth. vi. 25.—I beg leave, for the sake of the *unlearned* reader, to observe; That our translation, though for the most part faithful and excellent, has here slipped into a very great impropriety, and misrepresented our divine Master’s meaning. *Take no thought for your body*, is not only not the *true* sense, but the very *reverse* of the scriptural doctrine. We are required to take a *prudent* and *moderate* thought, for the necessities of life. The sluggard, who neglects this decent precaution, is severely reprimanded; is sent to one of the meanest animals, to blush for his folly, and learn discretion from her conduct, Prov. vi. 6. Our Saviour’s precept, and the exact sense of his expression, is, *Take no anxious thought; indulge no perplexing care: no such care, as may argue an unreasonable distrust of providence; or may rend and tear your minds with distressing, with pernicious solicitude.*

and uncontrollable will, be *against* us, or *for* us? Imagination itself shudders at the thought!—Can we rest satisfied, without a *well grounded* persuasion, that we are *reconciled* to this supreme LORD, and the objects of his unchangeable goodness!—If there be an abandoned wretch, whose apprehensions are so fatally blinded; who is utterly lost to all sense of his duty, and of his interest: let me bewail his *misery*; while I abhor his impiety. Bewail his misery; though popularity, with her choicest laurels, adorn his brow; though affluence, with her richest delicacies, load his table; though half a nation, or half a world, conspire to call him happy.

May I, by a *believing application*, solace myself in this everlasting source of love, perfection, and joy! Grant me this request, and I ask no more.—Only, that I may expect, not with a *reluctant anxiety*, but with a *ready cheerfulness*, the arrival of that important hour; when this vail of flesh shall drop, and all the shadows of mortality flee away. When I shall no longer complain of *obscure* knowledge; *languid* affections; and *imperfect* fruition—but, shall see the uncreated and immortal Majesty: *see* him, not in this distant and unaffecting method, of reasoning from his works; but with the most clear and direct intuition of the mind. When I shall *love* him, not with a cold and contracted spirit; but with the most lively and enlarged emotions of gratitude.—When I shall abundantly *enjoy* the light of his countenance; and be united, intimately, inseparably, united to his all-glorious GODHEAD—Take, ye *ambitious*, unenvied and unopposed, take to yourselves the *toys* of state. May I be enabled to *rejoice* in this blessed hope; and to *triumph* in that amiable, that adorable, that delightful name, the LORD MY GOD! And I shall scarce bestow a thought, on the splendid pageantry of the world; unless it be to *despise* its empty pomp and to *pity* its deluded admirers.

ALL these bodies, though immense in their size
and

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and almost infinite in their multitude, are *obedient* to the divine *command*. The God of wisdom "tellet^h their numbers," and is intimately acquainted with their various properties. The God of power "callet^h them all by their names," and assigns them whatsoever office he pleas^es.—He *marshalls* all the starry legions, with infinitely greater ease, and nicer order; than the most expert *general*; arranges his disciplined *troops*. He appoints their *posts*; he marks their *route*; he fixes the time for their *return*. The posts, which he appoints, they occupy, without fail. In the route, which he settles, they persevere, without the least deviation. And are punctual to the instant*, which he fixes for their return.—He has given them a *law*, which, through a long revolution of ages, shall not be broken: unless his sovereign will interposes, for its *repeal*. Then indeed, their motions are controuled; their action is suspended; and their influence sealed up.—The *sun*, at his creation, received a command to travel through the heavens. Since which, he has constantly performed the great circuit; and "rejoiced as a giant, to run his race." But, when it was requisite to subserve the purposes of divine love, the orders are countermanded; the flaming courier stops his career; *stands still in Gibeon*†; and, for the conveniency of the chosen people, holds back the falling day.—The *moon* too was dispatched with a charge, never to intermit her revolving motion, till day and night come to an end. But, when the children of providence, were to be favoured with an uncommon continuance of light, she halts in her march; makes

* "The planets, and all the innumerable host of heavenly bodies, perform their courses and revolutions, with so much certainty and exactness, as never once to fail; but, for almost 6000 years, come constantly about to the same period, in the hundredth part of a minute." *Stackhouse's Hist. Bib.*

† This is spoken in conformity to the scripture-language, and according to the common notion. With respect to the power which effected the alteration; it is much the same thing, and alike miraculous; whether the sun, or the earth, be supposed to move.

a solemn pause in the valley of Ajalon *; and delays to bring on her attendant train of shadows.—When the enemies of the LORD are to be discomfited, the *fiars* likewise are levied into the service; the stars are armed, and take the field; *the stars, in their courses, fought against Sifera* †.

So dutiful is material nature; so obsequious, in all her forms, to her Creator's pleasure!—The bellowing thunders, listen to his voice; and the vollied lightnings, observe the direction of his eye. The flying storm, and impetuous whirlwind, wear his yoke. The raging waves revere his nod; they shake the earth; and dash the skies; yet, never offer to pass the bounds, which he has set.—Even the planetary spheres; though vastly larger, than this wide-extended earth; are, in his hand, as clay in the hands of the potter: though, far swifter than the northern blast, they sweep the long tracks of æther; yet, are

* Josh. x. 12, 13.—The prophet Habakkuk, according to his Jofy manner, celebrates this event; and points out, in very poetical diction, the design of so surprising a miracle.—*The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: in the light, the long-continued and miraculous light, thy arrows, edged with destruction, walked on their awful errand: in the clear shining of the day, protracted for this very purpose, thy glittering spear, launched by thy people, but guided by thy hand, sprung to its prey.* Hab. iii. 11.

† Judg. v. 20.—The scripture-phrase *fought against*, will, I hope, be a proper warrant for every expression, I have used on this occasion.—The passage is generally supposed to signify, that some very dreadful meteors (which the stars were thought to influence); such as fierce flashes of lightning; impetuous showers of rain; and rapid storms of hail; were employed by the Almighty to terrify, annoy, and overthrow the enemies of Israel. If so, there cannot be a more clear and lively paraphrase on the text, than those fine lines of a Jewish writer.—*His severe wrath shall HE sharpen for a sword; and the world, shall fight with him against the ungodly. Then shall the right-aiming thunderbolts go abroad; and from the clouds, as from a well-drawn bow, shall they fly to the mark. And hail-stones full of wrath, shall be cast out of a stone bow; and the water of the sea shall rage against them; and the floods (as was the case of the river K'joon) shall cruelly drown them. Yea, a mighty wind shall stand up against them; and, like a storm, shall blow them away,* Wisd. v. 20, 21.

22. 23.

they

they guided by his reins, and precisely execute whatever he enjoins. — All these enormous globes of central fire, which beam through the boundless azure; in comparison of which, an army of planets, were like a swarm of summer-insects; those, even those, are conformable to his will, as the melting wax to the impressed seal. — And if all, ALL is obedient, throughout the whole ascent of things, shall man be the only rebel? Shall our unruly appetites reject the government of almighty goodness? Shall these headstrong passions break loose from divine restraint; and run wild, in exorbitant fallies, after their own imaginations.

O my soul, be stung with remorse, and overwhelmed with confusion, at such a thought! Is it not a righteous thing, that the blessed God should sway the sceptre, with the most absolute authority, over all the creatures, which his power has formed? especially over those creatures; whom his distinguishing favour, has endued with the noble principle of reason, and made capable of a blissful immortality? Sure, if all the ranks of inanimate existence, submit to their Maker's decree, by the necessity of their nature; this more excellent race of beings, should pay their equal homage, by the willing compliance of their affections *.

* This argument, I acknowledge, is not absolutely conclusive; but it is popular and striking. Nor can I think myself obliged, in such a work; where fancy bears a considerable sway; to proceed always with the caution and exactness, of a disputer in the schools. If there be some appearance of analogy, between the fact and the inference, it seems sufficient for my purpose; though the deduction should not be necessary, or strictly syllogistical. — One of the apostolic fathers; has an affecting and truly sublime paragraph, which runs entirely in this form: *Ἡλιος τε καὶ σελήνη, ἀστέρων τε χοροί, κατὰ τὴν διαταγὴν αὐτῆς ἐν οὐρανοῖς, διχὰ πάσης παρεκβάσεως, ἐξελίσσουσιν τὰς ἐπιταγὰς αὐτοῦ ὁρῶντες.* The sun, the moon, and the starry choir; without the least deviation, and with the utmost harmony, perform the revolutions appointed them by the supreme decree. From which remark, and abundance of other similar instances, observable in the economy of nature; he exhorts Christians, to a cordial unanimity among themselves, and a dutiful obedience to God. Vid. Clem. Roman. 1. Ep. ad Corinth. sect. 20. — See also a beautiful ode in Dr Watts' Lyric poems, intitled, *The Comparison and Complaint*, which turns entirely upon this very thought.

—Come then, all ye *faculties* of my *mind*; come, all ye *powers* of my *body*: give up yourselves, without a moment's delay, without the least reserve, to his governance. Stand, like dutiful servants, at his footstool; in an everlasting readiness, to *do* whatsoever he requires; to *be* whatsoever he appoints: to further, with *united* efforts, the purposes of his glory in this earthly scene: or else to *separate*, without reluctance, at his summons; the *one*, to sleep in the silent dust; the *other*, to advance his honour, in some remoter colony of his kingdom. — Thus, may I join with all the works of the Lord, in all places of his dominion, to recognize his universal supremacy; and proclaim him *Sovereign* of *souls*, as well as *Ruler* of *worlds*.

AT my first coming abroad, all these *luminaries* were totally *eclipsed*, by the overpowering lustre of the sun. They were all placed in the very same stations; and played the same sprightly beams; yet not one was seen. As the day-light wore away, and the sober shades advanced; *Hesperus*, that leads the starry train, disclosed his radiant forehead, and caught my eye. While I stood gazing, on his bright and beautiful aspect, others peeped through the blue curtains. Scarce had I turned to observe these fresh emanations of splendor; but others dropt the veil; others stole into view. When lo! vaster and more numerous multitudes sprung from obscurity; they poured, in shining troops, and in sweet confusion, over all the empyrean plain: till the firmament seemed, like one vast constellation; and “a flood of glory burst from all the “*skies*.”

Is not such the *rise*, and such the *progress*, of a true *conversion*; in the prejudiced infidel, or inattentive sinner? In the period of his vainer years, a thousand *interesting truths*, lay utterly *undiscovered*; a thousand *momentous concerns*, were entirely *disregarded*. But, when divine grace dissipates the delusive glitter, which dazzled his understanding, or beguiled his affections;

then,

then, he begins to discern, dimly to discern, the things that belong to his peace. Some powerful admonition of scripture, darts conviction into his mind; as the rays of a star, pierce the gloom of night. Then, perhaps, another awful, or cheering text, flings terror, or diffuses comfort; a *threatening* alarms his fears, or a *promise* awakens his hopes. This, possibly, is succeeded by some very *impressive* dispensation of providence; or improved by some edifying, and *instructive* conversation. All which is fastened, as to its continuance; and enlarged, as to its influence; by a diligent study of the sacred word. By this means, new truths continually pour their evidence; new scenes of refined and exalted, but hitherto, unknown delight, address him with their attractives. New desires take wing; new pursuits are set on foot. A new set of tempers actuate his heart; a new habit of conversation regulates his life. Old things are passed away; and "he, that was sometime "darkness, is now light, and life, and joy, in the "LORD."

The more attentively I view the crystal concave, the greater *number* of luminaries I discern. Abundance of minuter lights, that lay concealed from a *superficial notice*, are visible on a *closer examination*. Especially in those tracks of the sky, which are called the *galaxy*; and are distinguishable, by a sort of milky path. There, they are crowded, rather than diffused. The region seems to be all on a blaze, with their blended rays. They shine thick as *dew-drops*, on the face of the *morning*.—Besides this vast profusion, which the prying eye discovers; were I to make my survey, from any other part of the globe, that lies nearer the Southern Pole; I should behold a *new choir* of starry bodies, which have never appeared in our *hemisphere*.—And were I, either *here* or *there*, to view the firmament with the *virtuoso's glass*; I should find a prodigious multitude of flaming orbs, that, immersed in depths of æther, escape the keenest

est unassisted sight *.—And yet, in these various situations; even with the aid of the telescopic tube; I should not be able to descry the half, perhaps not a *thousandth part* of those illustrious bodies, which the vast expansive heavens contain †.—So, the more diligently I pursue my search, into those oracles of eternal truth, the *scriptures*; I perceive a wider, a deeper, an ever-increasing fund of *spiritual treasures*. I perceive the diviner strokes of wisdom, and the richer displays of goodness; the more transcendent excellency of the Messiah, and a more deplorable vileness in fallen man; a more immaculate purity in God's law, and more precious privileges in his gospel. And yet, after a course of study, ever so assiduous; ever so prolonged; I should have reason, to own myself, a mere *babe* in heavenly knowledge; or, at most, but a *puerile* proficient, in the *school* of CHRIST.

AFTER all my most accurate inspection, those *starry orbs* appear but as *glittering points*; and even the *planets*, though so much nearer our earthly mansion, seem not to exceed the size of *flaming bullets*. If then, we have such *imperfect apprehensions*, of visible and material things; how much more scanty and inadequate, must be our notions of invisible and immortal objects.—We behold the stars; and though

- * Come forth, O man, yon azure round survey,
And view those lamps, which yield eternal day.
Bring forth thy glasses: clear thy wond'ring eyes:
Millions beyond the former millions rise:
Look farther:—millions more blaze from remoter skies.

See an ingenious poem, intitled, The Universe.

† How noble, considered in this view, are the celebrations of the divine Majesty, which frequently occur in the sacred writings! It is the LORD that made the heavens, Psal. xcvi. 5.—What a prodigious dignity, does such a sense of things give, to that devout ascription of praise! Thou, even thou, art LORD alone: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, Neh. ix. 6.—And how inimitably sublime is that beautiful climax, in the inspired hymn! Praise HIM, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light: praise him, ye heavens of heavens, Psal. cxlviii.

every one is incomparably *bigger* than this whole earth; yet they *dwindle*, upon our survey, into the most diminutive forms. Thus we see, by faith, the glories of the blessed JESUS; the atoning efficacy of his death; the justifying merit of his righteousness; and the joys which are reserved for the godly. But, alas! even our most *exalted* ideas, are vastly *below* the truth: as much below the truth, as the report which our eyes make of those celestial edifices, is inferior to their real grandeur.—Should we take in all the *magnifying* assistances which art has contrived, those luminous bodies would elude our skill, and seem as *small* as ever. Should an inhabitant of earth travel towards the cope of heaven, and be carried forwards, in his aerial journey, more than a hundred and sixty millions of miles*; even in that *advanced* situation, those *oceans* of *flame* would look no larger than *radiant specks*.—In like manner, conceive ever so magnificently of the Redeemer's *honours*, and of the *bliss* which he has purchased for his people; yet you will fall short. Raise your imagination *higher*; stretch your invention *wider*; give them *all* the *scope*, that a soaring and excursive fancy can take; still your conceptions will be extremely *disproportionate* to their genuine perfections.—Vast are the bodies which roll in the expanse of heaven; vaster far are those fields of æther, through which they run their endless round: but the excellency of JESUS, and the happiness laid up for his servants, are greater than *either*; than *both*; than *all*. An inspired writer calls one, "The unsearchable riches of CHRIST;" and styles the other, "An exceeding great and eternal weight of glory."

* This, incredible as it may seem, is not a *mere supposition*, but a *real fact*. For, about the tenth of December, we are above 160,000,000 of miles nearer the Northern parts of the sky, than we were at the tenth of June. And yet, with regard to the stars situate in that quarter, we perceive no *change* in their *aspect*, nor any *augmentation* of their *magnitude*.

IF those stars, are so many inexhaustible *magazines of fire*, and immense *reservoirs of light*; there is no reason to doubt, but they have some very *grand uses*, suitable to the magnificence of their nature. To specify, or explain, the particular purposes they answer; is altogether impossible, in our present state of distance and ignorance. This, however, we may clearly discern; that they are disposed in such a manner, as is most *pleasing and serviceable* to mankind. — They are not placed at such an *infinite remove*, as to lie beyond our sight; neither are they brought *so near* our abode, as to annoy us with their beams. We see them shine on every side; and the deep azure, that serves them as a ground, heightens their splendor. But their influence is gentle, and their rays are destitute of heat. So that we are favoured with the view of a multitude of fiery globes; without any *risque*, either to the *coolness* of our *night*, or the *quiet* of our *repose*. — Who can sufficiently admire that immense benignity; which, on our account, *strews the earth* with blessings of every kind; and vouchsafes to make the *very heavens* subservient to our delight.

But it is not solely to adorn the roof of our palace, with costly gildings, that God commands the celestial luminaries to glitter through the gloom. We also reap considerable benefits from their ministry. — They *divide* our *time*, and fix its solemn periods. They settle the *order* of our *works*; and are, according to the destination mentioned in sacred writ, “for signs, and for seasons; for days, and for years.” The returns of heat and cold alone, would have been too precarious a rule. But these radiant bodies, by the *variation*, and also by the *regularity* of their motions, afford a method of calculating, absolutely certain, and sufficiently obvious. By this the *farmer* is instructed, when to commit his grain to the furrows, and how to conduct the operations of husbandry. By this, the *sailor* knows when to proceed on his voyage with least peril, and how to carry on the business of navigation with most success.

Why

Why should not the Christian, the *probationer* for *eternity*, learn, from the same monitors, to *number*, for nobler purposes, his *days*; and duly to transact the grand, grand affairs of his final salvation? Since God has appointed so many bright measurers of our time, to determine its larger periods, and to minute down its ordinary stages: sure *this* most strongly inculcates its *value*, and should powerfully prompt us to *improve* it.—Behold! the supreme LORD marks the progress of our life, in that most *conspicuous kalendar* above. And does not such an ordination tell us, in the most emphatical language, that it is given for *use*, not for *waste*? That no portion of it is delivered, but under a strict account; that all of it is entered, as it passes in the divine register; and therefore, that the stewards of such a talent, are to expect a future reckoning?—Behold! the very heavens are bidden to be the *accountants*, of our years, and months, and days. O! may this induce us to manage them, with a vigilant frugality; to part with them, as misers with their *boarded treasure*, warily and circumspectly; and if possible, as merchants with their *rich commodities*, not without their equivalent, either in personal improvement, or social usefulness!

How *bright* the starry diamonds shine! The ambition of eastern monarchs could imagine no distinction, more noble and sublime, than that of being likened to those beaming orbs*.—They form night's *richest dress*; and sparkle upon her sable robe, like jewels of the finest lustre. Like jewels! I wrong their character. The lucid stone has no brilliancy; quenched is the flame even of the golden topaz; compared with those glowing decorations of heaven.—How *widely* are their radiant honours *diffused*! No nation so remote, but sees their beauty, and rejoices in their usefulness. They have been admired by all preceding generations; and every rising age will gaze on their charms, with renewed delight.—How *animating*,

* Numb. xiv. 17. Dan. viii. 10.

then,

then, is that *promise*, made to the faithful ministers of the gospel ! “ They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever *.” Is not this a most winning encouragement, “ to spend “ and be spent,” in the service of souls ? Methinks, the stars *beckon* as they *twinkle*. Methinks they shew me their splendors, on purpose to awaken my *alacrity* in the *race* set before me ; on purpose to enliven my *activity* in the *work* that is given me to do. — If honour has any charms ; if true glory, the glory which cometh from God, is any attractive ; there cannot be a more powerful incitement to exercise all assiduity in my holy vocation. Therefore, when *zeal* becomes *languid*, let me have recourse to those lamps of heaven ; and *rekindle* its *ardour* at their inextinguishable fires.

Of the *polar star*, it is observable ; that, while other luminaries *alter* their situation, this seems invariably *fixed* †. While other luminaries, now, mount the battlements of heaven, and appear upon duty ; now, retire beneath the horizon, and resign, to a fresh set, the watches of the night ; this never departs from its station. This, in every season, maintains an *uniform position* ; and is always to be found, in the same track of the northern sky. — How often has *this* beamed bright intelligence on the *sailor* ; and conducted the keel to its desired haven ! In early ages, those that went down to the sea in ships, and occupied their business in great waters, had scarce any other *sure guide* for their wandering vessel. This therefore they viewed with the most solicitous attention. By this they formed their observations, and regulated their voyage. When this was obscured by clouds, or enveloped in mists ; the trembling mariner was *bewilder-*

* Dan. xii. 3.

† I speak in conformity to the *appearance* of the object. For, though this remarkable star revolves round the pole, its *motion* is so *slow*, and the *circle* it describes so *small* ; as render both the revolution, and change of situation, hardly perceivable.

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ed, on the watery waste. His thoughts fluctuated, as much as the floating surge; and he knew not *where* he was advanced, or *whither* he should steer. But when this auspicious star broke through the gloom, it dissipated the *anxiety* of his mind, and cleared up his *dubious passage*. He reassumed, with alacrity, the management of the helm; and was able to shape his course with some tolerable degree of satisfaction and certainty.

Such, only much *clearer* in its *light*, and much *surer* in its *direction*, is the *holy word* of God, to those myriads of intellectual beings, who are bound for the eternal shores; and, embarked in a vessel of frail flesh, are to pass the waves of this perilous world. In all *difficulties*, those sacred pages shed an *encouraging ray*; in all *uncertainties*, they suggest the *right determination*, and point out a *proper procedure*. And, what is still a more inestimable advantage; they, like the star which conducted the eastern sages, make *plain* our way to the Redeemer. They display his unspeakable merits; discover the method of being interested in his atonement, and lead the weary soul, *tossed* by troubles, and *shattered* by temptations, to that only *harbour* of peaceful repose.—Let us therefore attend to this *unerring directory*, with the same constancy of regard, as the sea-faring man observes his compass. Let us become as thoroughly acquainted with this *sacred chart*, as the pilot is with every trusty mark, that gives notice of a lurking rock; and with every open road, that yields a safe passage into the port. Above all, let us *commit* ourselves to this *infallible guidance*, with the same implicit resignation; let us conform to its divine precepts, with the same sedulous care; as the children of *Israel*, when sojourning in the trackless desert, followed the pillar of fire, and the motions of the miraculous cloud.—So will it introduce us, not into an *earthly Canaan*, flowing with milk and honey; but into an *immortal paradise*, where is the fulness of joy, and where are pleasures for evermore. It will introduce us into those happy, happy regions,

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where our sun shall no more go down, nor our moon withdraw itself; for the LORD shall be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning, together with the fatigues of our pilgrimage, shall be ended*.

I PERCEIVE a great variety in the size and splendor of those gems of heaven. Some are of the first magnitude; others, of an inferior order. Some glow with intense flames; others glimmer with fainter beams. Yet, all are beautiful; all have their peculiar lustre, and distinct use; all tend in their different degrees, to enamel the cope of heaven, and embroider the robe of night.—This circumstance is remarked by an author, whose sentiments are a source of wisdom, and the very standard of truth. “One star,” says the apostle of the *Gentiles*, “differeth from another star in glory: so also is the resurrection of the dead.”

In the world above, are various *degrees* of happiness, various *seats* of honour. Some will rise to more illustrious distinctions, and richer joys †. Some, like vessels of ample capacity, will admit more copious accessions of light and excellence. And yet, there will be no want, no deficiency, in any; but a fulness, both of divine satisfactions, and personal perfections. Each will enjoy all the good; and be adorned with all the glory; that his heart can wish, or his condition receive.—None will know what it is to envy. Not the least malevolence; nor the least selfishness; but everlasting friendship prevails, and a mutual complacency in each other's delight. Love, cordial love will give every particular saint a participation of all the fruitions ‡; that are diffused through the whole assembly of the blessed.—None will eclipse, but rather

* Is. lx. 20.

† 1 Cor. xv. 41. 42. The great Mr Mede prefers the sense here given, and the learned Dr Hammond admits it into his paraphrase. Whose joint authority, though far from excluding any other, yet is a sufficient warrant for this application of the words.

‡ Tolle invidiam, & tuum est quod habeo; Tolle invidiam, et meum est quod habes. Augustine.

reflect light upon another. A sweet interchange of rays subsists; all enlightened by the great Fountain, and all enlightening one another. By which reciprocal communication of pleasure and amity, each will be continually *receiving from*; each incessantly *adding to*; the general felicity.

Happy, supremely happy they, who obtain the most humble portion in the celestial mansions. Better to be a *door-keeper* in those "ivory palaces *," than to fill the most *gorgeous throne* on the earth. The very lowest place at God's right hand, is distinguished honour, and consummate delight.—O! that we may anticipate something of that blissful state, while we remain in our banishment below! May we, *by rejoicing* in the superior prosperity of another, make it *our own*! And, provided the *general result* is harmony, be content, be pleased, with *whatsoever part* is assigned to our share, in the universal choir of affairs.

WHILE I am considering the heavenly bodies, I must not entirely forget those fundamental laws of our modern astronomy, *projection* and *attraction*. One of which is the all-combining cement, the other is the ever-operative spring of the mighty frame.—In the beginning, the all-creating FIAT impressed a proper degree of motion, on each of those whirling orbs. Which, if not controuled, would have carried them on, in strait lines, and to endless lengths; till they were even lost in the abyss of space. But, the *gravitating* property being added to the *projectile* force, determined their courses to a *circular* † form; and obliged the

* Psal. xlv. 8.

† I am aware, the planetary orbits are not strictly *circular*, but rather *elliptical*. However, as they are but a small remove from the perfectly rotund figure; and partake of it incomparably more than the trajectories of the comets; I choose to represent the thing in this view. Especially, because the notion of a circle is so much more intelligible, to the generality of readers, than that of an ellipse; and because I laid it down for a rule, not to admit any such *abstruse* sentiment, or *barbarous* expression, as should demand a *painful attention*, instead of raising an *agreeable idea*. For which reason, I have

the reluctant rovers, to perform their destined rounds.—Were either of those causes to suspend their action, all the harmoniously moving spheres would degenerate into *torpid masses*: and, falling into the central fire, be burnt to *ashes*: or else would exorbitate into *wild confusion*; and each, by the rapidity of its whirl, be *dissipated* into *atoms*. But the impulsive and attractive energy, being most nicely attuned to each other; and, under the immediate operation of the Almighty exerting themselves in perpetual concert; the various globes run their radiant races, without the least interruption or deviation. So as to create the alternate changes of *day* and *night*; and distribute the useful vicissitudes of *succeeding seasons*. So as to answer all the great ends of a gracious providence; and procure every comfortable convenience, for universal nature.

Does not this constitution of the *material*, very naturally lead the thoughts to those grand principles of the *moral* and *devotional* world, *faith* and *love*?—These are often celebrated by the inspired apostle, as a comprehensive summary of the gospel *. These inspire the breast, and regulate the progress, of each *private Christian*. These unite the *whole congregation* of the faithful to God, and one another: to God, the great centre, in the bonds of gratitude and duty; to one another, by a reciprocal intercourse of brotherly affections, and friendly offices.—If you ask, Why is it impossible for the true believer to live at all adventures? to *stagnate* in a listless *inactivity*; or to indulge the *extravagant excursions* of lawless inclinations?—It is owing to “his faith, working by “love †.” He verily trusts, that CHRIST has sustained the infamy, and endured the torment, due to his sins. He firmly relies on that divine propitiation, for

avoided technical terms; have taken no notice of *Jupiter's satellites*, or *Saturn's ring*; have not so much as mentioned the names of the planets, nor attempted to wade into any depths of the science; lest, to those that have had no opportunity of using the *telescope*, or of acquainting themselves with a *system of astronomy*, I should propound *riddles*, rather than display *entertaining* and *edifying* truths.

* Col. i. 4. Philom. vers. 5.

† Gal. v. 6.

the pardon of all his guilt; and humbly expects everlasting salvation, as the purchase of his Saviour's merits. This produces such a set of grateful sentiments, and such a spirit of unfeigned thankfulness, as animate his whole behaviour. He cannot, he cannot *run to excess of riot*; because love to his adorable Redeemer, like a strong, but silken *curb*, sweetly *restrains* him. He cannot, he cannot lie *lulled* in a *lethargic indolence*; because love to the same infinite Benefactor, like a pungent, but endearing *spur*, pleasingly *excites* him. — In a word; faith supplies the powerful impulse, while love gives the determining bias; and leads the willing feet, through the whole circle of God's commandments. By the united efficacy of these *heavenly graces*, the Christian conduct is preserved, in the uniformity and beauty of holiness; as by the blended power of those *Newtonian principles*, the solar system revolves in a steady and magnificent regularity.

How admirable, how extensive, how diversified, is the force of this single principle of *attraction* *! — This penetrates the very essence of all bodies, and diffuses itself to the remotest limits of the mundane system. — By this, the vast worlds of matter hang *self-balanced* on their centres; and, though orbs of immense magnitude, require nothing, but this amazing property, for their support. To this we ascribe a phenomenon, of a very different kind, the *pressure* of the atmosphere: which, though a yielding and expansive fluid; yet constricted by an attractive energy; surrounds the whole globe, and incloses every creature, as it were with a tight bandage. An expedient, this, absolutely necessary to preserve the texture of our bodies: and indeed, to maintain every species of animal existence. — Urged by this wonderful *impetus*, the *rivers* circulate with a never-failing current, along the veins of the earth; rolling, with torrent-rapture, down the steep, or softly ebbing through

* I mean the attraction both of gravitation and cohesion.

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the plains. Impelled by the same mysterious force, the *nutritious juices* are detached from the soil; and, ascending the trees, find their way through millions of the finest meanders, in order to transfuse vegetative life into all the branches.—This confines the *ocean* within proper bounds: though the waves there, of roar; though they toss themselves, with all the madness of indignant rage; yet, checked by this potent, this inevitable curb, they are unable to pass even the slight barrier of sand. To this the *mountains* owe that unshaken firmness, which laughs at the shock of careering winds; and bids the tempest, with all its mingled horrors, impotently rave.—By virtue of this invisible mechanism; without the aid of crane or pulley, or any instrument of human device; many thousand *tons of water* are *raised*, every moment, into the regions of the firmament. By this, they continue *suspended* in thin air, without any capacious cistern, to contain their substance; or any massy pillars, to sustain their weight. By this same variously acting power, they *drop down* again in gentle falls of dew, or are *precipitated* in copious showers of rain; they *slide* into the fields in fleecy flights of snow, or are *darted* upon the houses in clattering storms of hail.—This occasions the strong *cohesion* of solid bodies: without which, our large machines could exert themselves with no vigour; and the nicer utensils of life, would elude our expectations of service. This affords a foundation for all those delicate or noble *mechanic arts*: which furnish mankind with numberless conveniences, both of ornament and delight.—In short; this is the prodigious *ballast* which composes the equilibrium, and constitutes the stability of things: this, the great *chain*, which forms the connections of universal nature; and the mighty *engine*, which prompts, facilitates, and, in good measure, accomplishes all her operations.—O! what *complicated effects*, from a *single cause* *!

* See another remarkable instance of this kind, in the *Reflections on a Flower Garden*, page 126.—together with a fine observation, quoted in the corresponding note.

What

What profusion, amidst frugality; an unknown profusion of benefits, with the utmost frugality of expence!

And what is this attraction? Is it a quality, in its existence, inseparable from *matter*; and, in its acting, independent on the DEITY?—Quite the reverse. It is the very *finger* of GOD: the constant impression of divine power: a principle, neither innate in matter, nor intellisible by mortals.—Does it not, however, bear a considerable analogy to the *agency* of the HOLY GHOST, in the Christian œconomy? Are not the gracious operations of the blessed Spirit, thus *extensive*, thus *admirable*, thus *various*?—That almighty Being transmits his gifts, through every age; and communicates his graces, to every adherent on the Redeemer. All, either of illustrious memory, or of beneficial tendency; in a word, “all the good that is done upon earth, he doth it himself.” Strong in *his* aid, and in the power of *his* might, the saints of all times, have trod vice under their feet; have triumphed over this abject world; and conversed in heaven, while they dwelt on earth. *Not I, but the grace of GOD which was with me**, is the unanimous acknowledgment of them all.—By the same kindly succours, the whole church is still enlightened, quickened, and governed. By his benign influences, the scales of *ignorance*, fall from the understanding; the leprosy of *evil concupiscence*, is purged from the will; and the fetters, the more than adamantine fetters, of *habitual iniquity*, drop off from the conversation. He breathes even upon dry bones†, and they live: they are animated with faith; they pant with ardent and heavenly desire; they exercise themselves in all the duties of godliness.—His real, though secret, inspiration, *dissolves* the flint in the impenitent breast; and *binds* up the sorrows, of the broken heart: *raises* the thoughts *high*, in the elevations of holy hope; yet

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

† See that beautiful piece of sacred and allegorical imagery displayed, Ezek. xxxvii.

lays them low, in the humiliations of inward abasement; *steels* the soul with impenetrable resolution, and persevering fortitude; and, at the same time, *softens* it into a dove-like meekness, and *melts* it in penitential sorrow.

WHEN I contemplate those *ample* and amazing *structures*, erected in endless magnificence, over all the æthereal plains:—When I look upon them as so many splendid *repositories* of light, or fruitful *abodes* of life:—When I remember, that, in all probability, there are orbs, vastly *more remote*, than those which appear to our unaided sight; orbs, whose *effulgence*; though travelling ever since the creation, is *not yet arrived* upon our coasts*:—When I stretch my thoughts to the innumerable orders of beings, which inhabit all those spacious systems; from the *loftiest seraph*, that surrounds the throne; to the *puny nations*, which tinge with blue the surface of the plum†; or mantle the standing pool with green:—

* If this conjecture (which has no less a person than the celebrated Mr *Huygens* for its author) concerning *unseen stars*, be true, if, to this observation be added, what is affirmed by our skilful astronomers; that the *motion* of the *rays* of light is so *surprisingly swift*, as to pass through ten millions of miles in a single minute—How *vast*! *beyond imagination* vast and unmeasurable, are the *spaces* of the *universe*!—While the mind is distended with the *grand idea*; or, rather, while she is dispatching her ablest powers of piercing judgment, and excursive fancy; and finds them all *drop short*; all baffled by the amazing subject: permit me to apply that beautiful exclamation, and noble remark—

————— Say, proud arch;
Built with divine ambition; in disdain
Of limit built; built in the taste of Heav'n;
Vast concave! ample dome! wast thou design'd.
A meet apartment for the DEITY?
Not so: that thought alone thy state impairs:
Thy *lofty* sinks; and shallows thy *profound*;
And straitens thy *diffusive*. ——— Night-Thoughts, No IX.

† Ev'n the blue down the purple plum surrounds,
A living world, thy failing sight confounds.
To HIM a peopled habitation shews,
Where millions taste the bounty God bestows.

See a very beautiful, sublime, and instructive Poem, styled—DEITY.

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O! how various are the links, in this immense chain! How vast the gradations, in this universal scale of existence! Yet *all* these, however vast and various, are the *work of God's hand*, and are full of his *presence*.

He rounded in his palm those dreadfully large globes, which are pendulous in the vault of heaven. He kindled those astonishingly bright fires, which fill the firmament with a flood of glory. By him they are suspended in *fluid æther*, and cannot be *shaken*: by him they dispense a *perpetual* tide of beams, and are never *exhausted*.—He formed, with inexpressible nicety, that exquisitely fine collection of tubes; that unknown multiplicity of subtile *springs*; which organize, and actuate, the frame of the minutest insect. He bids the crimson current roll; the vital movements play; and associates a *world of wonders*, even in an *animated point* *.——In all these, is a rich exhibition of *creating power*; to all these, are extended, the special regards of *preserving goodness*. From hence let me learn to rely on the providence, and to be ever sensible of the presence, of the supreme Majesty.

To *rely on his providence*.—For, not *one* being, amidst that *inconceivable number* and variety, which swarm through the regions of creation, is overlooked, or neglected, by the great omnipotent cause of all.

* There are living creatures, abundantly smaller than the mite. Mr Bradley, in his treatise on gardening, mentions an *insect*; which, after accurate examination, he found to be a *thousand times less* than the least visible grain of sand. At the same time declaring, that such an *animalcule*, though quite imperceptible to the naked eye, is a *bulky being*; compared with others, almost infinitely more minute, discovered by Mr *Lewenboec*.——If then we consider the *several limbs*, which compose (if I may be allowed the expression) such an organized particle: the *different springs*, which actuate such a set of limbs: the *flow of spirits*, inexpressibly more attenuated, which put those springs in motion: the various *fluids* that circulate: the *different secretions* that are performed; together with the proportionable minuteness of the *solids*, before they arrive at their *full growth*: not to mention other *more astonishing* modes of diminution:—sure, we shall see the utmost reason to acknowledge, that the adored Maker is
——*Maximus in minimis*; greatly glorious even in his *smallest* works.

However

However inconsiderable in its character, or diminutive in its size, it is still the production of the universal Maker, and belongs to the family of the almighty Father.—What! though enthroned archangels enjoy the *smiles* of his *countenance*; yet, the low inhabitants of earth, the most despicable worms that creep the ground, are not excluded from his kind *providential cares*. Though the manifestation of his perfections, is vouchsafed to holy and intellectual essences; his ear is open, to the cries of the young raven; his eye attentive, to the wants, and to the welfare, of the very meanest births of nature.—How much less then, are his *own people* disregarded? *Those*, for whom he has delivered his beloved Son to death, and for whom he has prepared habitations of eternal joy. *They* disregarded! No: **THEY** are “kept as the apple of an eye;” the very hairs of their head are all numbered; and the fondest mother may *forget* the *infant*, that is “dandled upon her knees, and sucks at her breast*”; much sooner than the Father of everlasting
 compassions

* **Is. xlix. 15.** *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee.*—How delicate and very expressive are the images, in this charming scripture! How full of *beauty*, if beheld in a *critical*, how rich with *consolation*, if considered in a *believing* view!—Can a *woman*; one of the softer sex, whose nature is most impressible, and whose passions are remarkably tender—Can such a one, not barely disregard, but entirely *forget*; not-suspend her care for a while, but utterly erase the very memory of—*her child*; her own child, not another's; a child that was formed in her *womb*, and is a part of herself?—*her son*; the more important, and therefore more desirable species; to whom it peculiarly belongs, to preserve the name, and build up the family—*her only son*; for the word is singular, and refers to a case, where, the offspring not being numerous, but centered in a single birth, must be productive of the fondest endearment.—Can she divest herself of all concern for such a child; not when he is grown up to maturity, or gone abroad from her house; but, while he continues in an infantile state, and must owe his whole safety to her kind attendance: while he lies in her bosom, rests on her arm, and even *sucks* at her breast;—especially, if the poor innocent be racked with pain, or seized by some severe affliction; and so become an object of *compassion*, as well as of love. Can she hear its piercing cries; can she see it all helpless, all help-

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compassions can *discontinue*, or *remit*, his watchful tenderness to those, whom he condescends to call, not servants only, but *children*.

Let this teach me also a more lively *sense* of the *divine presence*.—All the *rolling worlds* above; all the *living atoms* below; together with all the beings that *intervene*, betwixt these wide extremes; are *vouchers* for an ever-present Deity. “God has not left himself *himself* without witness.” There are the marks of his footsteps in every place, and the touches of his finger in every creature. “*Thy name is so nigh*. O thou all-supporting, all-informing LORD; and that *do thy wondrous works declare*. Thy goodness warms in the morning-sun, and *refresbes* in the evening-breeze. Thy glory *shines* in the lamps of midnight, and *smiles* in the blossoms of spring. We see a *trace* of thy incomprehensible grandeur, in the *boundless* extent of things; and a *sketch* of thy exquisite skill, in those almost *evanescent* sparks of life, the insect-race.”—O! how stupid is this heart of mine, that, amidst such a multitude of remembrancers, thronging on every side, I should forget thee a single moment! Grant me, thou great I AM; thou Source, and Support, of universal existence;—O! grant me an enlightened eye, to *discern* thee in every object; and a devout heart, to *adore* thee on every occasion. Instead of living without God in the world; may I be ever with him, and see all things full of him*!

If

less under its misery; and feel no emotions of paternal pity?—Or, if *one* such monster of inhumanity might be found; yet can all mothers be so degenerate? This sure, need never be feared. Much less need the *true believer*, be apprehensive of the *failure* of my *kindness*. An *universal* extinction, of these *strongest* affections of nature, is a more supposable case; than that I should ever be unmindful of my people, or regardless of their interests.

* ——— The glitt’ring stars,
By the deep ear of meditation heard,
Still in their midnight watches sing of HIM.
He nodes a calm. The tempest blows his wrath,
The thunder is his voice; and the red flash
His speedy sword of justice. At his touch

The

If the beautiful spangles, which a clear night pours on the beholder's eye; if those other fires, which beam in remoter skies; and are discoverable only by that revelation to the sight, the telescope: if all those *bright millions*, are so many fountains of day; enriched with native and independent lustre; illuminating planets, and enlivening systems, of their own*: O! what amazing pomp is disclosed, in the midnight-scene! What *unknown riches* are disseminated through all these numberless provinces of the great JEHOVAH's empire! Yet, immense and endless as they are, there is not the *meanest slave*, but carries incomparably *greater wealth* in his own bosom. The *soul*, that informs his clay;—the soul, that teaches him to think, and enables him to chuse; that qualifies him to relish rational pleasure, and to breathe sublime desire †;—the soul, that is possessed of such noble faculties; and, above all, is endued with the *dreadful*, the *glorious* capacity, of being pained, or blessed for ever—this soul surpasses in worth, whatever the eye can see; whatever, of material, the fancy can imagine. Before one such intellectual being, all the most astonishing *magnificence* of unintelligent creation, becomes poor and *contemptible* ‡. For this, Omnipotence

The mountains flame. He shakes the solid earth,
And rocks the nations. Nor in these alone,
In ev'ry common instance GOD is seen. *Thomson's Spring.*

* Consult with *reason*. Reason will reply,
Each *lucid point*, which glows in yonder sky,
Informs a *system* in the boundless space,
And fills, with glory, its appointed place:
With beams unborrow'd, brightens other skies;
And *worlds*, to thee unknown, with heat and life supplies.
The Universe.

† In this respect, as vested with such capacities, the soul even of fallen man, has an unquestionable greatness and dignity; is majestic, though in ruin.

‡ I beg leave to transcribe a pertinent passage, from that celebrated master of reason, and universal literature, Dr Bentley; whom no one can be tempted to suspect, either tinctured with enthusiasm, or warped to bigotry.—“If we consider,” says he, “the dignity of an intelligent

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Omnipotence itself has waked, and worked, through every age. To *convince* this soul, the fundamental laws of nature have been controuled; and the most amazing miracles, have alarmed all the ends of the earth. To *instruct* this soul, the wisdom of Heaven has been transfused into the sacred page; and missionaries have been sent from the great King, who resides in light unapproachable. To *sanctify* this soul, the almighty Comforter takes the wings of a dove; and, with a sweet transforming influence, broods on the human heart. And O! to *redeem* this soul from guilt; to rescue it from hell; the heaven of heavens was bowed, and God himself came down to dwell in dust.

Let me pause, a moment, upon this important subject. — What are the schemes, which engage the attention of eminent statesmen, and mighty monarchs, compared with the *grand interests* of an immortal soul? The *support of commerce*, and the *success of armies*, though extremely weighty affairs; yet, if laid in the balance against the salvation of a soul, are lighter than the downy feather, poised against talents of gold. To save a *navy* from *shipwreck*, or a *kingdom* from *slavery*, are deliverances of the most momentous nature, that the transactions of mortality can admit. But O! how they shrink into an inconsiderable trifle, if (their aspect upon immortality forgot) they are set in competition with the *delivery* of a *single soul*, from the anguish and horrors of a *distressed eternity* *!

Since, such is the soul's importance; what *vigi-*

" intelligent being, and put that in the scale against brute and in-
 " animate matter, we may affirm, without overvaluing human na-
 " ture, that the soul of one virtuous and religious man, is of
 " greater worth and excellency, than the sun, and his planets, and
 " all the stars in the world."

See his sermons at Boyle's Lect. No 8.

- Not all yon luminaries quench'd at once
 Were half so sad, as one benighted mind,
 Which gropes for happiness, and meets despair.

Night-Thoughts, No IX.

lance can be too much; or rather what holy solicitude can be sufficient; for the overseers of the Saviour's flock, and the guardians of this unutterably noble charge?—Since such is the importance of the soul; wilt thou not, O man, be watchful for the preservation of thy own? Shall every casual incident awaken thy concern; every transitory toy, command thy regard? And shall the welfare of thy soul, a work of continual occurrence; a work of endless consequence; sue, in vain, for thy serious care?—Thy soul, thy soul, is thy all. If this be secured, thou art greatly rich, and wilt be unspeakably happy. If this be lost, a whole world acquired, will leave thee in poverty; and all its delights enjoyed, will abandon thee to misery.

I HAVE often been *charmed*, and *awed*, at the sight of the nocturnal heavens; even before I knew how to consider them, in their proper circumstances of majesty and beauty. *Something*, like *magic*, has struck my mind, on a transient and unthinking survey of the æthereal vault; when tinged throughout with the purest azure, and decorated with innumerable starry lamps. I have felt, I know not what powerful and aggrandizing impulse; that snatched me from the *low intanglements* of vanity, and prompted an ardent sigh for *sublimier objects*. Methought, I heard, even from the silent spheres, a commanding call, to spurn the abject earth, and pant after unseen delights.—Henceforward, I hope to imbibe more copiously, *this moral emanation* of the skies; when, in some such manner as the preceding, they are rationally seen, and duly weighed. The stars, I trust, will *teach*, as well as *shine*; and help to dispel, both nature's gloom, and my intellectual darkness. To some, they discharge no higher a service, than that of holding a *flambeau* to their feet, and softening the horrors of their night. To me, may they be ministers of a superior order; and act as *counsellors of wisdom*, and *guides to happiness*. Nor will they fail to execute this noble office, if they gently

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gently and gradually light my way, into the knowledge of their adored Maker; and point out, with their silver-rays, my path to his beatific presence.

I GAZE, I ponder. I ponder, I gaze; and think ineffable things. I roll an eye of awe and admiration. Again and again I repeat my ravished views; and can never satiate my sight, in this immense theatre. I spring my thoughts in speculation, till even fancy tires upon her wing. I find wonders, *ever new*; wonders, more and *more amazing*.—Yet, after all my present inquiries, what a mere *nothing* do I *know*; by all my future searches, *how little* shall I be able to *learn*; of those vastly distant suns, and their circling retinue of worlds! Could I pry with Newton's piercing sagacity, or launch into his most extensive surveys: yet, even then, my apprehensions would be little better, than those dim and scanty images, which the *mole*, just emerged from her cavern, receives on her feeble optic.—This, sure, should repress all immoderate thirst, after an *insight* into the *secrets* of the starry structures; and make me more careful to *cultivate my heart*. To fathom the depths of the Divine Essence; or to scan universal nature, with a critical exactness; is an attempt, that sets the *acuteest philosopher*, very nearly on a level with *the ideot*. Since it is almost, if not altogether, as impracticable by the one, as by the other.

Be it then my chief study, not to pursue, what is absolutely unattainable; but rather to seek, what is obvious to find, easy to be acquired, and of inestimable advantage, when possessed. O! let me seek *that charity*, which edifieth*; *that faith*, which purifieth. Love,

* 1 Cor. viii. 1. I need not inform my reader, that in this text; in that admirable chapter, 1 Cor. xiii. and in various other passages of scripture; the word *charity*, is by no means to be confined, to the particular act of *alms-giving*, or external beneficence. It is of a much more exalted and extensive nature. It signifies that noble and divine grace, which *warms* the soul with a *supreme love to God*; and *enlarges* it with a *disinterested affection* for men. Which renders it

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Love, humble love, and not *conceited science*, keeps the door of heaven. Faith, a child-like faith in JESUS; and not the *haughty self-sufficient spirit*, which scorns to be ignorant of any thing; presents a key * to those abodes of bliss.—This present state, is the scene destined to the *exercise of devotion*; the invisible world, is the place appointed for the *enjoyment of knowledge* †. There, the dawn of our infantile minds, will be advanced to the maturity of perfect day; or rather, there our midnight-shades, will be brightened into all the lustre of noon. There, the souls that come from the *school of faith*, and bring with them the *principles of love*, will dwell in light itself; will be obscured with no darkness at all; will know, even as they are known.—Such an acquaintance, therefore, do I desire to form, and to carry on such a correspondence, with the heavenly bodies; as may shed a benign influence on the seeds of grace, implanted in my breast. Let the exalted tracks of the firmament, sink my soul into *deep humiliation*. Let those eternal fires, kindle in my heart an *adoring gratitude*, to their Almighty Sovereign. Let yonder ponderous and enormous globes, which rest on his supporting arm; teach me an *unshaken affiance*, in their incarnate Maker. And I shall be—if not wise as the astronomical adept, yet WISE UNTO SALVATION.

HAVING now walked, and worshipped, in this *universal temple*, that is *arched with skies*; *emblazed with stars*; and *extended even to immensity*.—Having

the reigning care of the life, and chief delight of the heart, to promote the *glory of the ONE*, and the *happiness of the other*.—*This, this*, is that charity, of which so many *excellent things* are everywhere spoken: which can never be too highly extolled, or too earnestly coveted, since it is the *image of GOD*, and the *very spirit of heaven*.

* By Milton beautifully stiled,
———The golden key,
That opes the palace of eternity.

Milt. Comus.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

cast.

cast an eye, like the enraptured patriarch * ; an eye of reason and devotion, through the magnificent scene : with the one, having discovered an *infinity* of worlds ; and with the other, met the *Deity* in every view.——Having beheld, as *Moses* in the flaming bush, a glimpse of *JEHOVAH's* excellencies ! reflected from the planets, and streaming from myriads of celestial luminaries——Having read various lessons, in that stupendous book of wisdom †, where unmeasurable sheets of azure compose the page : and orbs of radiance write, in everlasting characters, a comment on our Creed.——What remains, but that I close the midnight-solemnity, as our LORD concluded his grand sacramental institution, with a song of praise ?——And behold a hymn, suited to the sublime occasion ; indited by ‡ inspiration itself ; transferred into our language, by || one of the highest and happiest efforts of human ingenuity.

*The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue athereal sky,
And spangled heav'ns, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim :
Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display ;
And publishes to ev'ry land,
The work of an almighty hand.*

*Soon as the evening-shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale ;
And nightly, to the list'ning earth,
Repeats the story of her birth :*

* Gen. xv. 5.

† ————— For heaven
Is as the book of GOD before thee set,
Wherein to read his wondrous works. —————

‡ Psal. xix.

|| Addison, Spect. Vol. VI. NO 465.

H h 3

Milton

White

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*While all the stars, that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.*

*What though, in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing, as they shine,
The hand that made us, is divine.*

A
WINTER-PIECE.

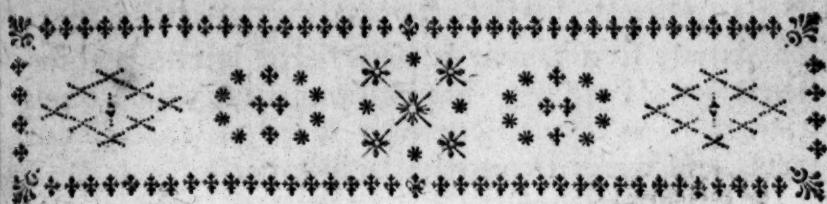
*Storms and Tempests may calm the Soul—Snow and
Ice be taught to warm the Heart, and praise the
Creator.*

Anonym. Lett. to the Author. See p. 196.

THE

The CONTENTS.

INtroduction—Shortness of the Winter's Day—Incessant
Rain, producing a flood—Tempest,; its Effects; at
Land, by Sea—Pitchy Darkness; riding in it—Thick
Rime—Keen Frost, and serenity of Weather—Severe
Cold, and piercing Winds—Deep Snow—General Thaw—
Evergreens—Storm of Hail—Rainbow.



A

W I N T E R - P I E C E .

IT is true, in the delightful seasons, HIS tenderness, and HIS love, are most eminently displayed. — In the *vernal* months, all is beauty to the eye, and music to the ear. The clouds drop fatness; the air softens into balm; and flowers, in rich abundance, spring where-ever we tread, bloom where-ever we look. — Amidst the burning heats of *Summer*, HE expands the leaves, and thickens the shades: he spreads the cooling arbour, to receive us; and awakes the gentle breeze, to fan us: the moss swells into a couch, for the repose of our bodies; while the rivulet softly rolls, and sweetly murmurs, to soothe our imagination. — In *Autumn*, HIS bounty covers the fields, with a profusion of yellow treasure; and bends the boughs, with loads of delicious fruit. He furnishes his hospitable table with present plenty, and prepares a copious magazine for future wants. — But is it *only* in these smiling periods of the year, that GOD, the all-gracious GOD, is seen? Has *Winter* no tokens of his presence? Is not Winter eloquent of his praise? Yes: “His way is in the whirlwind.” Storms and tempests fulfil his word, and extol his power. Even piercing frosts bear witness to his goodness; while they bid the shivering nations tremble at his wrath. — Be Winter then, for a while, our theme*. Perhaps, those

* A sketch of this nature, I must acknowledge, is quite different from the subject of the book; and, I cannot but declare, was as far

those *barren* scenes, may be *fruitful* of intellectual improvement. Perhaps, that chilling cold, which binds the earth in its icy chains; may serve to enlarge our hearts, and warm them with holy love.

SEE! how the *day* is *shortened*!—The sun, detained in fairer climes, or engaged in more agreeable services, rises, like an unwilling visitant, with tardy and reluctant steps. He walks, with a shy indifference, along the edges of the southern sky; casting an oblique glance, he just looks upon our dejected world; and scarcely scatters light through the thick air. Dim is his appearance, languid are his gleams, while he continues. Or, if he chance to wear a brighter aspect, and a cloudless brow; yet, like the young and gay in the house of mourning, he seems uneasy till he is gone; is in haste to depart,—And let him depart. Why should we wish for his longer stay; since he can shew us nothing but spectacles of woe? The flowery world lies dead, and the tuneful tribes are struck dumb. The trees, stript of their verdure, and lashed by storms, spread their naked arms to the enraged and relentless heavens. Fragrance no longer floats in the air; but chilling damps hover, or cutting gales blow. Nature, divested of all her beautiful robes, sits, like a forlorn, disconsolate widow, in her weeds. While winds, in doleful accents, howl; and rains, in repeated showers, weep.

We regret not, therefore, the speedy departure of the day. When the room is hung with *funeral black*, and dismal objects are all around; who would wish to have the *glimmering tapers* kept alive; which can only discover scenes of sorrow; only make the horror

far distant from the thoughts of the author. But, the desire of *several* acquaintance, together with an intimation of its usefulness, by a very *polite* letter from an *unknown* hand, (which has *undesignedly* furnished me with the best motto I could recollect), prevailed with me to add a few descriptive touches, and improving hints, on what is so often experienced in these northern regions. I hope, the attempt I have made to oblige these gentlemen, will obtain the *approbation*, or at least the *excuse*, of my other readers.

visible?

visible?—And, since this mortal life is little better than a continual conflict with sin, or an unremitted struggle with misery; is it not a *gracious* ordination, which has reduced our age to a *span*? Fourscore years of trial, for the virtuous, are sufficiently long; and more than such a term, allowed to the wicked, would render them beyond all measure vile. Our way to the kingdom of heaven, lies through tribulations: shall we then *accuse*, shall we not rather *bless*, the providence, which has made the passage short? Soon, soon we cross the vale of tears; and then arrive on the happy hills, where light for ever shines, where joy for ever smiles.

Sometimes, the day is rendered shorter still; is almost blotted out from the year*. The vapours gather: they thicken into an impenetrable gloom, and obscure the face of the sky. At length, the *rains* descend; the sluices of the firmament are opened; and the low-hung clouds pour their congregated stores. Copious and unintermitted, still they pour; and still are unexhausted. The waters drop incessantly from the eaves, and rush in rapid streams from the spouts. They roar along the channelled pavements, and stand in foul shallows amidst the village streets. Now, if the inattentive eye, or negligent hand, has left the roof but scantily covered; the insinuating element finds its way into every flaw, and oozing through the cieling, at once upbraids and chastises the careless inhabitant. The ploughman, soaked to the skin, leaves his half-tilled acre. The poor poultry, dripping with wet, croud into shelter. The tenants of the bough fold up their wings, afraid to launch into the streaming air. The beasts, joyless and dispirited, ruminate under their sheds. The roads swim, and the brooks swell.—The *river*, amidst all this watery ferment, long contained itself within its appointed bounds: But, swollen by innumerable currents: and roused, at last, into uncontrollable rage; bursts over its banks;

* Involvere diem nimbi, & nox humida cœlum
Abstulit.——

shoots into the plain; bears down all opposition; spreads itself far and wide; and buries the meadow under a brown, sluggish, soaking *deluge*.

How fortunate for man, that this inundation comes, when there are no flowery crops in the valley to be overwhelmed; no fields standing thick with corn, to be laid waste! At *such* a juncture, it would have been *ruin* to the husbandman and his family: but, *thus* timed, it yields *manure* for his ground, and promises him *riches* in reversion. — How often, and how long, has the divine Majesty bore with the most injurious affronts from sinners! His goodness triumphed over their perverseness, and graciously refused to be exasperated. But Oh! presumptuous creatures, multiply no longer your provocations. Urge not, by repeated iniquities, the almighty arm to strike; lest his long-suffering cease, and his fierce anger break forth; break forth, like a *flood of waters* *, and sweep you away, into irrecoverable and everlasting perdition.

How mighty! how majestic! and O, how mysterious are thy works, thou GOD of heaven, and LORD of nature! When the air is calm, where sleep the *stormy winds*? in what chambers are they reposed, or in what dungeons confined? Till thou art pleased to awaken their rage, and throw open their prison-doors: then, with irresistible impetuosity they fly forth, scattering dread, and menacing destruction.

The whole atmosphere is hurled into the most tumultuous confusion. The aerial torrent bursts its way over mountains, seas, and continents. All things feel the dreadful shock. All things tremble before the furious blast. The *forest*, vexed and tore, groans under the scourge: her sturdy sons are strained to the very root, and almost kiss the soil they were wont to shade. The stubborn oak, that disdains to bend, is dashed headlong to the ground; and, with shattered arms, with prostrate trunk, blocks the road. — While the flexile reed, that springs up in the marsh,

yielding to the gulf, (as the *meek* and pliant temper, to injuries; or the *resigned* and patient spirit to misfortunes); eludes the force of the storm, and survives amidst the wide spread havock.

For a moment, the turbulent and outrageous sky, seems to be asswaged; but, it intermits its wrath, only to increase its strength. Soon, the sounding squadrons of the air return to the attack, and renew their ravages with redoubled fury. The stately dome rocks, amidst the wheeling clouds. The impregnable tower totters on its basis, and threatens to overwhelm, whom it was intended to protect. The ragged rock is rent in pieces*; and even the hills, the perpetual hills, on their deep foundations, are scarcely secure.—Where, now, is the place of safety? When the *city* reels, and houses become heaps! Sleep affrighted flies. Diversion is turned into horror. All is uproar in the element; all is consternation among mortals; and nothing but one wide scene of rueful devastation, through the land.—Yet this is only an *inferior* minister of divine displeasure. The executioner of *milder* indignation. How then—O! *how will the lofty looks of man be humbled, and the haughtiness of men be bowed down*†: when the LORD GOD Omnipotent shall meditate terror—when he shall set *all* his terrors in array—when he arises, to judge the nations, and to shake terribly the earth!

* 1 Kings xix. 11.

† ————— *Mortalia corda*
Per gentes humilis stravit pavor.—————

One would almost imagine, that *Virgil* had read *Isiah*, and borrowed his ideas from chap. ii. vers. 11. The *humilis*, and *stravit*, of the one, so exactly correspond with the—*humbled*—*bowed down*—of the other. But, in one circumstance, the poet is vastly inferior to the prophet. The latter, by giving a very striking contrast to his sentiments, represents them with incomparably greater energy. He says not, *men* in the gross, or the *human heart* in general: but *men* of the most elated looks; hearts big with the most arrogant imaginations; even *haughtiness* itself; shall stoop from their supercilious heights, shall grovel in the lowest dust of abasement, and shudder with all the extremes of an abject pusillanimity.

The *ocean* swells with tremendous commotions. The ponderous waves are heaved from their capacious bed, and almost lay bare the unfathomable deep. Flung into the most rapid agitation, they sweep over the rocks; they lash the lofty cliffs; and toss themselves into the clouds. Navies are rent from their anchors; and, with all their enormous load, are whirled, swift as the arrow, wild as the winds, along the vast abyss. Now, they climb the rolling mountain, they plough the frightful ridge, and seem to skim the skies: anon, they plunge into the opening gulph, they lose the sight of day, and are lost themselves to every eye. How vain is the pilot's art! How impotent the mariner's strength! They reel to and fro, and stagger in the jarring hold; or cling to the cordage, while bursting seas foam over the deck. *Despair* is in every face, and *death* sits threatening on every surge.—But why, O ye astonished mariners, why should you abandon yourselves to despair? Is the LORD's hand *shortened*, because the waves of the sea rage horribly? Is his ear *deafened*, by the roaring thunders, and the bellowing tempest? Cry, cry, unto HIM, who “holdeth the winds in his fist, and the “waters in the hollow of his hand.” HE is all-gracious, to hear; and almighty, to save. If HE command, the storm shall be hushed to silence; the billows shall subside into a calm; the lightnings shall lay their fiery bolts aside: and, instead of sinking in a watery grave, you shall find yourselves brought to the desired haven.

Sometimes, after a joyless day, a more melancholy *night* succeeds.—The lazy, louring vapours had wove so thick a veil, as the meridian sun could scarcely penetrate. What gloom then must overwhelm the nocturnal hours! The moon withdraws her shining. Not a single star, is able to struggle through the deep arrangement of shades. All is *pitchy darkness*, without one enlivening ray. How solemn! How awful! It is like the return of chaos, or the shroud of nature. I do not wonder that it is the parent of terrors, and

so apt to engender fear. Lately, the *tempest* marked its rapid way with *mischief*; now the *night*, dresses her silent pavilion with *horror*.

I have *sometimes* left the beaming tapers, withdrawn from the ruddy fire, and plunged into the thickest of these footy shades: not in the least regretting the change, but rather exulting in it as a welcome deliverance. The very gloom was pleasing, was exhilarating, compared with the conversation I quitted. The speech of my *companions* (how does it grieve me, that I should, *even once*, have occasion to call them by *that* name!) was the language of darkness: was horror to the soul, and torture to the ear*.—Alas! that I should have room to make the reflection! May I never be under a *necessity* of repeating it! Their tongues were dipt in the venom of asps: “their throat was an open sepulchre;” cruel to their neighbour’s character, as the grave; and insatiable in *slandrous* assassinations, as the grave in devouring her prey.—Sometimes, their licentious and ungovernable discourse, shot arrows of *profaneness* against Heaven itself; and, in proud defiance, challenged the resentment of Omnipotence.—Sometimes, as if it was the glory of human nature to share and cherish the *grossest* appetites of the brute; and the mark of a gentleman, to have served an apprenticeship in a brothel; the filthiest jests of the stews, (if low *obscenity* can be a jest), were nauseously obtruded on the company, till all the *modest* part of it was expelled: while the other

* What has been said, I ask’d my soul, what done?
How slow’d our mirth? or whence the source begun?
Perhaps, the jest, that charm’d the sprightly croud,
And made the jovial table laugh so loud,
To some *false* notion ow’d its poor pretence,
To an ambiguous word’s perverted sense;
To a wild sonnet, or a wanton air,
Offence and torture to the sober ear.

Perhaps, alas! the pleasing stream was brought
From this man’s error, from another’s fault;
From topics, which good nature would forget,
And *prudence* mention with the last regret.

Prior’s Solomon.
besotted

besotted creatures laughed aloud, though the leprosy of uncleanness appeared on their lips.—Are not these persons *prisoners of darkness*; though blazing sconces, pour artificial day through their rooms? Are not their souls immured in the most baleful shades; though the noon-tide sun is brightened, by flaming on their gilded chariots? They discern not that great and adorable Being who fills the universe with his infinite and glorious presence: who is all eye, to observe their actions; all ear, to hear their words. They know not the all-sufficient Redeemer, nor the unspeakable blessedness of his heavenly kingdom. They are groping for the prize of happiness; but will certainly grasp the thorn of anxiety. They are wantonly sporting on the brink of that precipice; from whence, in a moment, they may fall headlong into *irretrievable ruin, and endless despair*.

They have forced me out, and are, perhaps, deriding me in my absence: are charging my reverence for my Maker, and *real sense of the excellency of the RATIONAL nature*, to the account of humour and singularity; narrowness of thought, or sourness of temper.—But be it so.—I will indulge no indignation against them; and, if any thing like it *should* arise, I will convert it into prayer—“Pity them, “Oh thou Father of mercies!—Shew them the madness of their profaneness—Shew them the baseness of their vile ribaldry—Let them be dumb, in silent shame and confusion; till they open their lips to “adore thine *insulted* Majesty—to implore thy gracious pardon—and humbly devote to thee, those “social hours, those injured faculties; which they “are now abusing, to thy dishonour; to their own “mutual contamination; and (unless timely repentance intervene) to their common infamy, and “final perdition.”

I ride home amidst the gloomy void; all darkling and solitary, I can scarce discern my horse's head; and only guess out my blind road. *No companion, but danger;*

danger; or, perhaps, "destruction ready at my side *." — But, why do I fancy myself solitary? Is not the Father of lights; the God of my life; the great and everlasting Friend; always at my right hand? Because the day is excluded, is his omnipresence vacated? Though I have no earthly acquaintance near, to assist in case of a misfortune; or to beguile the time, and divert uneasy suspicions, by entertaining conferences: may I not lay my help upon the Almighty, and converse with God by humble supplication? For this exercise, no place is improper; no hour unseasonable; and no posture incommodious. This is *society*, the best of society, even in solitude. This is a fund of delights, easily portable and quite inexhaustible. A *treasure* this, of unknown value; and liable to no hazard, from wrong or robbery; but perfectly secure to the lonely wanderer, in the most darksome paths.

And why should I distress myself with *apprehensions of peril*? This access to God, is not only an indefeasible privilege, but a kind of *ambulatory garrison*. Those, that make known their requests unto God, and rely upon his protecting care, he gives *his angels* charge over their welfare. His angels are commissioned, to escort them in their travelling; and to hold up their goings, that they dash not their foot against a stone †. Nay, *he himself* condescends to be their guardian, and "keeps all their bones, so that not one of them is broken." They are, according to the certificate of revelation, "in league with the stones of the field ‡." Though they fall headlong on the flints; even the flints, fitted to fracture the skull, shall receive them as into the arms of friendship; and not offer to hurt, whom the LORD is pleased to preserve.

May I then enjoy the presence of this gracious God, and darkness and light shall be both alike. Let HIM whisper peace to my conscience: and this dread silence shall be more charming than the voice of eloquence, or the strains of music. Let HIM reveal his ravishing

* Job xviii. 12.

† Psal. xci. 11, 12.

‡ Job v. 23.

perfections in my soul; and I shall not want the saffron-beauties of the morn, the golden glories of noon, or the impurpled evening sky. I shall sigh only for those most desirable and distinguished realms; where the light of HIS countenance *perpetually* shines, and consequently — “there is * no night there.”

How surprising are the alterations of nature! I left her the preceding evening plain and unadorned. But now, a *thick rime* has shed its hoary honours over all. It has shagged the fleeces of the sheep, and crisped the traveller's locks. The hedges are richly fringed, and all the ground profusely powdered. The downward branches are tasselled with silver, and the upright are feathered with the plumy wave.

• But the *fine* are not always the *valuable*. The air, amidst all these gaudy decorations, is charged with chilling and *unwholesome* damps. The hazy influence spreads wide; sits deep; hangs heavy and oppressive on the springs of life. A listless languor clogs the animal functions; and the purple stream glides but faintly through its channels. In vain, the ruler of the day exerts his beaming powers: in vain, he attempts to disperse this insurrection of vapours. The sullen malignant cloud refuses to depart. It envelopes the world, and *intercepts the prospect*. I look abroad for the neighbouring village; I send my eye in quest of the rising turret; but am scarce able to discern the very next house. Where are the blue arches of heaven; where the radiant countenance of the sun; and where the boundless scenes of creation? Lost, lost are the beauties; quenched their glories. The thronged theatre of the universe, seems an empty void; and all its elegant pictures, an undistinguished blank.—Thus would it have been with our intellectual views, if the *gospel* had not come in to our relief. We should have known, neither our true good, nor real evil. We had been a riddle to ourselves; the present state all confusion, and the future impenetrable

darkness. But, the Sun of righteousness, arising with potent and triumphant beams, has dissipated the interposing cloud; and opened a prospect, more beautiful than the blossoms of Spring; more clearing than the treasures of Autumn; more enlarged than the extent of the visible system: which, having led the eye of the mind, through fields of grace, over rivers of righteousness, and hills crowned with knowledge; terminates, at length, in the heavens; sweetly losing itself in regions of infinite bliss, and endless glory.

—As I walk along the fog, it seems, at some little distance, to be almost solid gloom; such as would shut out every glimpse of light, and totally imprison me in obscurity. But, when I approach, and enter it; I find myself agreeably mistaken, and the mist much *thinner* than it *appeared*.—Such is the case, with regard to the *sufferings* of the present life; they are not, when experienced, so dreadful, as a timorous imagination surmised. Such also is the case, with reference to the *gratifications* of *sense*; they prove not, when enjoyed, so substantial as a sanguine expectation represented. In both instances, we are graciously disappointed: the edge of the calamity is blunted, that it may not wound us with incurable anguish: the exquisite relish of the prosperity is pallied, that it may not captivate our affections, and enslave them to inferior delights.

Sometimes, the face of things wears a more pleasing form; the very reverse of the foregoing. The sober evening advances, to close the short-lived day. The firmament, clear and unsullied, puts on its brightest blue. The stars, in thronging multitudes, and with a peculiar brilliancy, glitter through the fair expanse. While the *frost* pours its subtle and penetrating influence all around. Sharp, and intensely keen, all the long night, the rigid æther continues its operations. When, late and slow, the morning opens her pale eye; in what a curious and amusing disguise, is nature dressed! The icicles, jagged and uneven, are pendant on the houses. A whitish film incrusts the
windows,

windows, where mimic land skips rise, and fancied figures swell. The fruitful fields are hardened to iron; the moistened meadows are congealed to marble; and both resound (an effect unknown before) with the peasant's hasty tread. The stream is arrested in its career, and its ever-flowing surface chained to the banks. The fluid paths become a solid road; where the finny shoals were wont to rove, the sportive youth slide, or the rattling chariots roll *. And (what would seem to an inhabitant of the southern world, as unaccountable, as the deepest mysteries of religion) that very same breath of heaven, which cements the lakes into a crystal pavement; cleaves the oaks, as it were, with invisible wedges, "breaks in pieces the northern iron, and the steel;" even while it builds a bridge of icy rock, over the seas †.

The air is all serenity. Refined by the nitrous particles, it affords the most distinct views, and extensive prospects. The seeds of infection, are killed; and the pestilence destroyed, even in embryo. So, the cold of affliction tends to mortify our corruptions, and subdue our vicious habits.—The crowding atmosphere constricts our bodies, and braces our nerves. The spirits are buoyant, and sally briskly on the execution of their office. Had we been under such unclouded skies, and so bright a sun, in the Summer-months; we should have been melted with heat, and softened into supineness: been ready to stretch our limbs under the spreading beach, and lie at ease by the murmuring brook. But, now, none loiters in his path; none is seen with folded arms: all is in mo-

- * Concreverunt subito currenti in flumine crustæ;
Undaque jam tergo ferratos sustinet orbes,
Pupibus illa prius patulis, nunc hospita plaustis.
Æraque dissiliunt vulgo.

Virg.

† Job xxxviii. 30. The waters are hid, locked up from the cattle's lips, secured from the fisher's nets, and concealed from the human eye, as wells are with a ponderous and impenetrable stone. And not only lakes and rivers, but the surface of the great and boundless deep, with its restless and uncontrollable surges, is taken captive תַּרְכִּיזָה by the frost, and bound in shining fetters.

tion;

tion; all is activity; choice, prompted by the weather, supplies the spur of necessity. Thus, the *rugged school of misfortune*, often trains up the mind, to a lively exertion of its faculties; the *keen* climate of *adversity*, often inspires us with a manly resolution: when a soft and downy affluence, perhaps, would have relaxed all the generous springs of the soul, and have left it enervated with pleasure, or dissolved in indolence.

“*Cold cometh out of the North* *.” The winds, having swept those deserts of snow, arm themselves with millions of frozen particles, and make a fierce descent upon our isle. Under black and scowling clouds, they drive, dreadfully whizzing, through the darkened air. They growl around our houses; assault our doors; and, eager for entrance, fasten on our windows. Walls can scarce restrain them; bars are unable to exclude them; through every cranny they force their way. Ice is on their wings; they scatter agues through the land; and Winter, all Winter, rages as they go. Their breath is as a searing † iron to the little verdure left in the plains. Vastly more pernicious to the tender plants than the sharpest knife; they not only kill their branches, but wound the very root. Let not the corn venture far, from the entrenchment of the furrow; let not the fruit-bearing blossoms dare to come abroad, from their lodgment in the bark; lest these savage, murderous blasts, destroy the hope of the advancing year.

Oh! it is severely cold! Who is so hardy, as not to shrink at this *excessively pinching* weather? Every face is pale. Even the blooming cheeks contract a gelid hue; and the teeth hardly forbear chattering.—

* Job xxxvii. 9.

† This, I suppose, is the meaning of that figurative expression, used by the prophet *Habakkuk*; who, speaking of the *Chaldeans* invading *Judea*, says,—*Their faces*, or the incursions they make, *shall sup up*, shall swallow greedily, shall devour utterly, the inhabitants of the country, and their valuable effects; *as the keen corroding blasts of the east-wind*, destroy every green thing in the field. Hab.

Ye that sit easy and joyous, in your commodious apartments, solacing yourselves in the diffusive warmth of your fire; be mindful of your brethren, in the cheerless tenement of poverty. *Their* shattered panes are open to the piercing winds; a tattered garment scarcely covers their shivering flesh; while a few faint and dying embers, on the squalid hearth, rather mock their wishes, than warm their limbs.—While the generous juices of *Oporto*, sparkle in your glasses; or the steams, beautifully tinged, and deliciously flavoured, by the *Chinese* leaf, smoke in the elegant porcelain: O remember, that many of your fellow-creatures, amidst all the rigour of these inclement skies, are emaciated with sickness; benumbed with age; and pining with hunger. Let “their loins” bless you,” for comfortable cloathing! supply them with food, with fuel; and baffle the raging year. So, may you never know any of their distresses, but only by the hearing of the ear; the seeing of the eye; or the feeling of a tender commiseration!—Methinks, the bitter, blustering winds plead for the poor indigents: may they breathe pity into *your* breasts! while they blow hardships into *their* huts.—Observe those blue flames, and ruddy coals, in your chimney: quickened by the cold, they look more lively, and glow more strongly. Silent, but seasonable admonition to the gay circle, that chat and smile around them! *Thus*, may your hearts, at such a juncture of need, kindle into a peculiar beneficence! Detain not your superfluous piles of wood. Let them hasten to the relief of the starving family. Bid them expire in many a willing blaze, to mitigate the severity of the season, and cheer the bleak abodes of want; so shall they ascend, mingled with thanksgivings to God, and ardent prayers for your welfare—ascend, more grateful to heaven, than curling columns of the most costly incense.

Now the winds cease. Having brought their load, they are dismissed from service. They have wasted an immense cargo of clouds, which empty themselves in

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ing*

snow. At first, a few scattered sherds come wandering down the saddened sky. This slight skirmish, is succeeded by a general onset. The flakes, large and numerous, and thick-wavering, descend in a continual flow. All night, the fleecy showers, in softest silence, fall. In the morning, when we awake, what a surprising change appears? — Is this the same world! — Here is no diversity of colour! I can hardly distinguish the trees, from the hills on which they grow. Where is the difference between the grounds, destined to the plough: and those, reserved for pasturage? All things lie blended in bright confusion. So bright, that it heightens the splendor of day, and even dazzles the organs of sight. The lawn is not so fair, as this snowy mantle, which invests the fields; and even the lily, was the lily to appear, would look tarnished in its presence. I can think but of *one* thing, which *excels*, or equals, this glittering robe of Winter. Is any one desirous to know what I mean? He may find it described, in that admirable hymn *, composed by the royal penitent. Is any one desirous to be possessed of so valuable a rarity? He will find it offered to his acceptance, in every page of the gospel. — See! (for the eye cannot satisfy itself, without viewing again and again the curious, the delicate scene) See! how the hedges are habited, like spotless vestals: the houses are roofed, with uniformity and lustre: the meadows are covered, with a carpet of the finest ermine †: the groves bow beneath the lovely burden: and all, all below, is one wide, immense, shining waste of white.

Amazing are the works of the great Creator, and prodigiously *various*. How pliant and ductile is nature, under his forming hand! At his command, the self-same substance assumes the most different shapes; and is transformed into an endless multiplicity

* Psal. li. 7. See page 99. 100.

† This animal is milk white; and so far is it from having *spots*, that, as the tradition goes, it will rather die, or be taken, than sully its whiteness. See Chambers's *Dictionary*.

ry of figures. If HE ordains, the water is *moulded* into hail, and discharged upon the earth like a volley of shot; or, it is *consolidated* into ice, and defends the rivers, “as it were with a breastplate.” At the bare intimation of his will, the very same element is scattered in hoar-frost, like a sprinkling of the most *attenuated* ashes; or, is spread over the surface of the ground, in these swelling couches of deep and *flaky* down.

The snow, however it may carry the appearance of cold, affords a *warm* garment for the corn; screens it from nipping frosts, and cherishes its infant-growth. It will abide for a while, to exert a protecting care, and exercise a fostering influence. Then, touched by the sun, or thawed by a softening gale, the furry vestiture melts into genial moisture; sinks deep into the soil, and saturates its pores with the dissolving nitre; replenishing the glebe with that vegetative life, which will open into the bloom of Spring, and ripen into the fruits of Autumn.—Beautiful emblem this, and comfortable representation, of the *efficacy* of the divine word: both in the successful, and advantageous issue of its operation! “As the rain cometh down, “and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, “and bread to the eater: so shall my word be, that “goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return “unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I “please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto “I sent it*.”

Nature, at length, puts off her lucid veil. She drops it, in a trickling *thaw*. The loosened snow, rolls in sheets from the houses. Various openings spot the hills; which, even while we look, become larger, and more numerous. The trees rid themselves, by degrees, of the hoary incumbrance. Shook from the springing boughs, part falls heavy to the ground, part

* II. lv. 10. 11.

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flies abroad in shining atoms. Our fields and gardens, lately buried beneath the drifted heaps, rise plain and distinct to view.—And since we see nature once again, has she no verdant traces, no beautiful features, left? They are, like real friends, very rare; and, therefore, the more particularly to be regarded, the more highly to be valued.—Here and there the *holly* hangs out her glowing berries; the *laurustinus* spreads her graceful tufts; and both, under a covert of unfading foliage.—The plain, but hardy *ivy* clothes the decrepit, crazy wall; nor shrinks from the friendly office; though the skies frown, and the storm roars.—The *laurel*, firm, erect, and bold, expands its leaf of vivid green. In spite of all the united, the repeated attacks of wind, and rain, and frost, it preserves an undismayed lively look; and maintains its post, while withering millions fall around. Worthy, by vanquishing the rugged force of Winter, worthy to adorn the triumphant conqueror's brow.—Nor must I forget the *bay-tree*; which scorns to be a mean pensioner, on a few sunny gleams; or, with a servile obsequiousness, to vary its appearance, in conformity to the changing seasons. By such indications of sterling worth, and stanch resolution, reading a lecture to the poet's genius; while it weaves the chaplet for his temples.—*These*, and a few other plants, clad in native verdure, retain their comely aspect, in the bleakest climes, and coldest months.

Such, and so durable, are the accomplishments of a *refined* understanding, and an *amiable* temper. The tawdry ornaments of dress, which catch the unthinking vulgar, soon become insipid and despicable. The rubied lip, and the flushing cheek, fade. Even the sparkling wit*, as well as the sparkling eye, please but

* “How little does God esteem the things that men count great; the endowments of wit and eloquence, that men admire in some! alas! how poor are they to him! He respecteth not any who are wise in heart: they are nothing, and less than nothing, in his eyes. Even wise men admire, how little it is that men know; how small a matter lies under the sound of these popular words.”

but for a moment. But the virtuous mind has charms, which survive the decay of every inferior embellishment; charms, which add to the fragrancy of the flower, the *permanency* of the *ever-green*.

Such, likewise, is the *happiness* of the *sincerely religious*; like a tree, says the inspired moralist, "whose leaf shall not fall." He borrows not his peace from external circumstances; but has a fund within, and is "satisfied from himself *." Even though impoverished by misfortunes, he is rich in the *possession* of *grace*, and richer in the *hope* of *glory*. His joys are infinitely superior to, as well as nobly independent on, the transitory glow of sensual delight, or the capricious favours of, what the world calls, Fortune.

If the *snow* composes the light-armed troops of the sky; methinks, the *hail* constitutes its heavy artillery. When driven by a vehement wind, with what dreadful impetuosity does that stony shower fall! How it rebounds from the frozen ground, and rattles on the resounding dome! It attenuates the rivers into smoke, or scourges them into foam. It crushes the infant-flowers; cuts in pieces the gardener's early plants; and batters the feeble fortification of his glasses, into

"dews, a learned man, a great scholar, a great statesman. How much more doth the all-wise God meanly account of these! He often discovers, even to the world, their meanness. He bestows them. So valour, or birth, or worldly greatness, these he gives, and gives as things he makes no great reckoning of, to such as shall never see his face, and calls to the inheritance of glory poor despised creatures, that are looked on as the off-scourings and refuse of the world."

—Thus, says an excellent author; who writes with the most amiable spirit of benevolence; with the most unaffected air of humility; and, like the sacred originals, from which he copies, with a majestic simplicity of style.—Whose *select works*, I may venture to recommend, not only as a treasure, but as a MINE of genuine, sterling, evangelical piety.—See page 520 of Archbishop LEIGHTON's *select works*, the *Edinburgh* edition, octavo: which it is necessary to specify, because the *London* edition does not contain that part of his writings, which has supplied me with the preceding quotation.

* Prov. xiv. 14.

shivers. It darts into the traveller's face; he turns, with haste, from the stroke; or feels, on his cheek, for the gushing blood: if he would retreat into the house, it follows him even thither; and, like a determined enemy that pushes the pursuit, dashes through the crackling panes.—But, the fierce attack is quickly over. The clouds have soon spent their shafts; soon unstrung their bow. How happy for the inhabitants of the earth, that what is so dreadfully *furious*, should be so remarkably *short*! What else could endure the shock, or escape destruction?

But, behold a *bow*, of no hostile intention; a bow, painted in variegated colours, on the disburdened cloud. How vast is the extent, how delicate the texture, of that *showery arch*! It compasseth the heavens, with a glorious circle: and makes us forget the horrors of the storm. Elegant its form, and rich its tinctures; but more delightful its sacred significancy. While the violet and the rose, blush in its beautiful aspect; the olive-branch smiles in its gracious import. It writes in radiant dyes, what the angels sung in harmonious strains; "Peace on earth, and good-will towards men." It is the stamp of *insurance*, for the continued welfare of this present world; and a comfortable *token* of a better state, and happier kingdom:—a kingdom, where a *rainbow* is represented, as surrounding the throne*; to intimate, that *there* storms shall beat, and Winter pierce no more; but one unbounded *Spring* for ever, ever bloom.

* Rev. iv. 3.

A
T A B L E
OF THE
T E X T S

More or less illustrated in this W O R K.

N. B. *As Dr SHAW, in his supplement to his excellent book of Travels, and several other authors of the greatest eminence, have given an index of scriptures, occasionally explained in their writings; I doubt not, but I shall oblige many of my readers, by what I here subjoin; those especially, whose taste is happily formed to relish the beauties of the sacred records,*

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